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The Philosophy of Liberation of The Bolivarian Education System

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The Philosophy of Liberation of The Bolivarian Education System

by

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We must either invent or err,

Simón Rodríguez

Pancho Villa quemaba todas las riquezas de los hacendados excepto los pianos, y no porque supiera tocar, sino porque los destinaba a las escuelas…

Dedication

To my parents, rural teachers, *normalistas,* who reclusively raised three children; to Alejandra, *compañera que merece todo;* to Luvina and her little brother, Lucio Emiliano; to my sisters, Adonicam, Jagguit and their families; to Pepillo, July and their family.

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The Philosophy of Liberation of The Bolivarian

Education System

by

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The purpose of this work is to explore the philosophical foundations of the Bolivarian education system. By studying the intellectuals from which the Bolivarian education system has been built, such as Simón Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez along with the national official curricula from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, several questions are addressed in this dissertation: What is the philosophical basis of the Bolivarian education system? Subquestions: a) How can Enrique Dussel's philosophy of liberation help us understand the cultural, political, and epistemological orientation of the Bolivarian education system?; b) What philosophical possibilities does the Bolivarian education system suggest for the philosophy of critical pedagogy? A philosophical analysis was performed using the coloniality of power perspective (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b) and the philosophy of liberation (Dussel, 1980, 1978, 1990, 1996, 2007, 2009). The findings of this study suggest that

there is an historical path of a philosophy of education from Latin America silenced by the dominant thought throughout history; that is, there is a Bolivarian philosophy of education rooted in Simón Bolívar, Simón Rodríguez and other Latin American intellectuals that can enrich critical pedagogy. Some components regarding national curricula, contents, learning projects and didactic materials related to the philosophy of education for the second and definitive independence of Latin America are discussed.

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Chapter One: Introduction

BACKGROUND

As Enrique Dussel has proven (2007, 2009), knowledge first appeared in Asia, America, Africa, and the Middle East before it appeared in the West. In AD 380 the emperor Flavius Theodosius established Christianity as an official religion in the Roman imperium. After that, Justiniano reinforced this governmental norm, and the Roman Empire ensured the prohibition of "pagan knowledge" through measures such as persecution, torture, and other punitive measures. As a result, many intellectuals fled from the empire to other regions, especially the East, and Baghdad became the intellectual capital of Europe, Asia, and Africa. The most relevant philosophers, mathematicians, and engineers found Baghdad to be the perfect place to create new knowledge and revisit Grecian masterpieces, which were prohibited in Europe.

From the time of the invasion of the American continent by the English and Spanish empires, many of the original inhabitants resisted the *genocidios* (genocides) and *epistemicidios*[1] against them. In other words, there were peoples who resisted colonialism

[1] In his book *Una Epistemologia del Sur*, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2009) uses the concept of *epistemicidio* to stress how the Western worldview has destroyed *saberes* (ways of knowing) around the world. He addresses how modernity has tried to wipe out all kinds of alternative knowledge in order to oppress and exploit the peoples of the world.

(the domain of bodies and lands) and who fought against coloniality of power [2] (the domain of knowledge).

When this invasion of the American continent started, there were already *tlamatinime* (philosophers) such as the náhuatl thinkers Tlacaélel (1398–1475) and Nezahualcóyltl (1402–1472) to name only a few, or the Inca *hamaut'a* (*amauta* in Spanish or "sage" in English) in the region of the *Tawantisuyu* (present-day Peru). Various American peoples also had specific philosophies, such as the Mayan philosophy of the Popul Vuh and the *Chilam Balam* and *pachosofía quechua* from Perú and Bolivia (Estermann 2011). During and after the invasion, many thinkers resisted the *epistemicidio* against their ways of knowing. This is the case of Vasco de Quiroga (1470–1565), Francisco Tenamaztle (1540s–1550s), Antonio de Montesinos (?–1545), Bartolomé de las Casas (1484–1565), Hernando de Alvarado Tezozómoc (1525–1610), Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala (1526–1613), and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1539–1616) to name only a few.

From the sixteenth century until today, during the "long night of 500 years" (EZLN 1996), many intellectuals have challenged the material and epistemological aspects of colonialism and capitalism in many fields of knowledge. In education the situation of oppression of Latin American countries has led to the idea that intellectuals had to link their intellectual work with the suffering of their peoples.

[2] Anibal Quijano (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b) thoroughly developed the concept of coloniality of power, which I will explain in the next section.

Specifically, critical pedagogy has tackled some of these interesting tensions between capitalism and education as a field of knowledge, especially since the beginning of the twentieth century. After Anibal Ponce's *Educación y Lucha de Clases* (1934) and Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), the philosophical basis of critical pedagogy has been primarily a Western and a modernist one. This especially applies to the strand of critical pedagogy that studies class as a core category.[3] The problem is that critical pedagogy has the opportunity to incorporate the philosophy of the oppressed and to explore how oppressed peoples try to construct a philosophy of education. As McLaren shows (McLaren & Sleeter, 1995, Mclaren, 2000), there are many nuances within critical pedagogy, from orthodox Marxist perspectives to critical postmodernism and resistance multiculturalism (McLaren & Sleeter 1995) as well as other ways to problematize multiculturalism within education (Steinberg, 2001; Steinberg and Kincheloe 1997). There have been great efforts to complexify critical pedagogy, including efforts to build on Engels's notion of how the patriarchal social institution of the family ensured the father's private property (2010 [1884]); explorations of the epistemological implications of critical education (Kincheloe 2004, 2008); studies of critical pedagogy, democracy, and education for peace (Carr 2011, 2012); and decolonial education (De Lissovoy 2007, 2008, 2010b).

[3] The strand of critical pedagogy that studies gender as a core category has more deeply problematized the Western philosophical basis of critical pedagogy (Hooks, Lamas, Lagarde, among others) than the strand of critical pedagogy that emphasizes class as a category.

If Ivan Illich (1971) addressed the need to dismantle the whole educational system, Bourdieu (1964, 1970, 1997) showed the interconnections of the symbolic effects of capitalism on the terrain of education. For his part, McLaren (1989, 2000; and Lankshear 1994; McLaren & Sleeter 1995; McLaren & Jaramillo 2007; etc.) has described the multiple views that Critical Pedagogy has on class, race, gender, and colonialism. Critical pedagogy is not a unified corpus of knowledge, but feeds itself from many ongoing contributions. In Latin America this debate has particular characteristics.

Paulo Freire is one of the most important theorists of critical pedagogy whose work has been studied from Latin American perspectives. For many in Latin America, Freire constructed his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* from two philosophical perspectives: Marxism and Liberation Theology. In this book Freire made two invitations. One was Western: the modernist and Marxist strand. The second was non-Western: the philosophical strand, which emerges from the oppressed in their struggle for liberation.[4] In the second part of the twentieth century and in the beginning of the twenty-first century, critical pedagogy has developed interesting work around decolonial education (De Lissovoy 2007, 2008, 2010b), critical pedagogy and democracy, and education for peace (Carr 2011, 2012). What is interesting is that the critical pedagogy strand that addresses mainly class analysis has followed the first invitation using the Western-modernist version of the Marxist framework to defend the political aspect of pedagogy

[4] It is important to remember how Paulo Freire in most of his work explained how Theology of Liberation was his personal context and the philosophical context of his work in Brazil, in his exile in Chile, and in some other contexts in Latin America.

against conservative forces (Bourdieu 1964, 1970, 1997; Ribeiro 1982; Apple 1979; McLaren 1989, 2000, 2005; Giroux 1983, 1990, Giroux & McLaren, 1989, among others).

The problem is that after Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, most Western scholars of critical pedagogy who study class as the core category took for granted the Western-modernist-hegemonic version of the Marxist perspective that comes from the center as *the* philosophical basis of critical pedagogy. However, Freire as a Latin American intellectual also drew from Liberation Theology (Gutiérrez 1975/1971, 1979; Preiswerk 1994; Sobrino 2000, among others) because the latter was an intellectual strand addressing the oppressed of Latin America as creators of theoretical knowledge. Liberation Theology draws from Christianity and Marxism to create an original theological perspective that has emerged from the oppressed peoples of Latin America in their struggle for liberation.

To quote one of Gustavo Gutiérrez's book titles, the "history-making force of the poor" is the theoretical and theological basis of Liberation Theology. The most important notion is that the poor construct their liberation and simultaneously create knowledge in their struggle against the dominant class. One of the most important theological concepts in Liberation Theology is that Jesus Christ does not live or lie in the church (as an institution or as a location) or in the Eucharist, but rather within the poor. This concept is problematic for the Catholic Church since it bases its theological doctrine in the theological principle that the ontic place of Jesus Christ is the Eucharist.

When Oscar Arnulfo Romero used Christianity to say that God is in favor of the poor of El Salvador and when he used Marxism to say that the wealthy Salvadorians exploited the people of El Salvador, he activated social struggles. However, when the masses of El Salvador organized themselves for their liberation, they created a new philosophical and theological proposal: Liberation Theology. In this regard, critical pedagogy has only attended to the first invitation of Freire, the Western-modernist-hegemonic one that comes from the center, but has not taken into account the second, the construction of the philosophy of the oppressed of Latin America as active social subjects of philosophy-- the philosophy that comes from the periphery of the economic and epistemological global order.

This study aims to develop part of Freire's second invitation aimed at understanding the poor and exploited peoples of Latin America not as interesting peoples in revolt but rather as creators of knowledge in their struggle for liberation. It is important to mention that this study is not a theological research project; this is a philosophical research project on education. This is why Freire's second invitation is taken as a starting point for studying a Latin American educational strand (the education of the socialism of the twenty-first century) in philosophical terms. As a result, Dussel's Philosophy of Liberation will be fundamental for this study, as the next sections explain.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As has been described, studying educational experiences of the oppressed peoples of the Third World in philosophical terms can enrich critical pedagogy. In this project,

the education of the Socialism of the twenty-first century in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is the case to be studied.

Some of the recent educational proposals in Latin America that enrich the philosophical basis of critical pedagogy are part of an intellectual movement called the education of the Socialism of the twenty-first century; this movement has emerged in countries such as the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (hereafter referred to either as the RBV or Venezuela), the Republic of Ecuador, and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.[5] It is important to note that this intellectual movement of the education of the Socialism of the twenty-first century entails a fight against capitalism, colonialism, and coloniality of power (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b).

The first country to explicitly address the need to construct the Socialism of the twenty-first century was Venezuela. This project to build a different kind of society has an interesting political and educational context.

Venezuela Before Chávez

The twentieth century reveals some interesting aspects of the history of Venezuela. January 23, 1958, is a key date because on that day the dictatorship of Marco Pérez Jiménez was overthrown. One of Caracas's emblematic neighborhoods is called "23 de Enero" (January 23) because of the date's historic importance. What followed was the period from 1958 to 1992 known as *Puntofijismo*. This part of Venezuela's history is

[5] These are the official names of these countries as a result of the success of many social (and intellectual) movements in the last fourteen years.

important since the *Puntofijismo* represents what Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian government were supposed to be working against.

A provisional regime organized elections in 1958 when Rafael Caldera ran for *Acción Democrática* (Democratic Action or AD); Jovito Villalba for *Unión Republicana Democrática* (Republican Democratic Union or URD); and Rómulo Betancourt for *Comité de Organización Política Electoral Independiente* (Political Electoral Independent Organization Committee or COPEI). Betancourt won the elections, and one of the first things that he did was to call for the Punto Fijo political agreement (Medina & López 2003).

The Punto Fijo regime is a part of Venezuela's history from 1958 to1992 and is known as a political agreement between the principal political parties (AD, COPEI, and URD). This agreement was mainly about organizing the government's taking of power in order to avoid coups among the principal political parties. It is important to note that the Venezuelan Communist Party was excluded from the Punto Fijo agreement. In this way, *Puntofijismo* established elections as a "competition" between two major parties during the second part of the twentieth century. As Ellner and Hellinger (2003) put it, the Punto Fijo meeting was an agreement among the elite to administer power and to avoid more coups.

Carlos Andrés Pérez was president of Venezuela during two periods: the first from 1974 to 1979 and the second from 1989 to 1993. This political figure is significant in the sense that during the first period, as an oil exporter only, Venezuela strengthened

its national economy in the international context. In his second presidential term Andrés Pérez tried to enroll Venezuela into the international free market, this time in the neoliberal context, but a tremendous popular rebellion impeded that: *El Caracazo*, which signaled the end of *Puntofijismo.*

At the end of the 1980s, specifically February 27, 1989, Venezuela experienced a terrible massacre and social rebellion known as *El Caracazo*, which represented a huge protest against the neoliberalism recommended by international financial organizations in Venezuela. The import substitution model, consisting of treaties and legislation to protect the domestic market at the expense of the theory of free trade, was eliminated little by little during 80s, but *El Caracazo* was a massive social protest against the imposition of the economic package that international financial organizations suggested for the government of Carlos Andrés Pérez. These recommendations were mainly about reducing the role of the state in the economy, privatizing state companies, eliminating gasoline subsidies, etc.

The period of time known as Puntofijismo was dominated by a colonial-dependent economic model characterized by structural adjustment policies in which the focus was on adjusting what Venezuela required within the international economic model. The fetishistic discourse of the free market suggested that the solution was to implement yet more liberalist monetarist and technocratic policies (Chávez, 2004). In the first stage of the Punto Fijo agreement between 1959 and 1973, there was a strengthening of the Venezuelan political process, but in its last stage there was a decline of the political

party system and an more institutional crisis (Medina & López Maya, 2003). In addition, there was a generational break between the military hierarchy of the 1960s and a new generation of highly trained elite junior officers who were products of educational reforms in the national military academies. This caused instability among the military forces and in turn the coup attempts of 1992. In addition, high inflation, recession, the near collapse of the financial sector, the overwhelming dependence on income from oil exports (Trinkunas, 2002), the dramatic currency devaluation in February 1983 (Kornblith 2003), and other factors were key components leading to the breakdown of the Punto Fijo regime (McCoy & Myers 2007).

It is important to note that education was influenced by the dictatorship of Pérez Jiménez after the Venezuelan Constitution of 1961, making education available mostly for wealthy Venezuelans. In other words, the conception of education as a social right or service was not the paradigm. Between 1969 and 1973 the educational system focused only on preparing people by means of memorization of didactic content. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education under the government of Luís Herrera Cámpins released the important *Ley Orgánica de Educación de 1980* (the Organic[6] Law of Education of 1980), which aimed to organize the educational system in Venezuela (Núñez Muñoz, Morales & Díaz, 2007).

[6] In the Latin American context, "organic" refers to the fact that this national law aims organizing the educational system, in this case of Venezuela.

According to UNICEF (as cited in Sanoja in 2009) at the beginning of 1990 the reality of basic education in Venezuela was repetition and early desertion. Approximately 40 percent of elementary students in Venezuela dropped out of school before the sixth grade, and only 30 percent completed ninth grade. In 1986, a national commission made up of prestigious intellectuals elaborated a national diagnosis of education in Venezuela for the president, Jaime Lusinchi. As a product of its work, the *Comisión Presidencial del Proyecto Educativo Nacional* (Presidential Commission for the National Educative Project) released a national document in which important intellectuals described how between 1960 and 1982 national budgetary imbalance and inflation affected universities in Venezuela. National financial difficulties constrained universities' activities to only developing teaching, while teaching, research, and social dissemination languished (Uslar Pietri, Albornoz, Bezara, Cárdenas, Damas, Essenfeld & Iribarren, 2011).

In this manner, the Punto Fijo era in Venezuela's history can be understood as an agreement by the elite to control Venezuela without needing to impose a military dictatorship. Nevertheless, the legacy of liberalist measures and internal political confrontations exhausted the Punto Fijo regime. This context highly influenced education in Venezuela because budgetary imbalances and the liberalist fetishism impeded the provision of education for all. In turn, the student movements that *Puntofijismo* repressed from the 1960s to the 1990s (Medina, Pacheco, Delgado & Arias, 2011) fed the rest of the social movements that in turn overthrew the Punto Fijo era (López Sánchez & Hernández Rodríguez 2001).

Hugo Chávez And The Impact Of Socialism Of The Twenty-First Century

On February 4, 1992, Hugo Chávez attempted to lead a coup d'état against the government of Carlos Andrés Pérez, but after his attempt failed Chávez surrendered. Chávez stood in front of the cameras and pronounced his famous "for now" remark when he accepted that he could not overthrow Andrés Pérez's regime. Chávez then spent two years in prison before he was released by Rafael Caldera, the president following Andrés Pérez. Chávez ran for president in 1998, and a year later he took office with the promise of calling a constitutive assembly in order to create a new national constitution and to rebuild the country. The main purpose of these political actions was to lead Venezuelans on a different path away from the neoliberal government that had caused the *Caracazo*.

Once he became the president of Venezuela, Chávez called a National Constituent Assembly in order to construct a new constitution for the country. The result was a new constitution approved on December 30, 1999. Article 102 made the provision of education at all levels a duty of the state. In addition to this, Chávez's government instituted a *Constituyente Educativa* [Educative Constituent] between 1999 and 2001 to initiate a national debate about creating new educational content and policies for Venezuela. As Pablo Imen explained (2011a, 2011b), an important result of the Educative Constituent was the establishment of the *Proyecto Educativo Nacional* [National Educative Project], which incorporated such concepts as the need for incorporating activities at the local community level and in educational institutions into the creation of the new Ministry of Education and Sports.

Beginning in 2002, Hugo Chávez, as president of Venezuela, drew from Heinz Dieterich Steffan's book *El Socialismo del siglo XXI* (2002) to start talking about the need for socialism in the twenty-first century. At the World Social Forum of 2005 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, Chávez proposed the construction of socialism in the twenty-first century as a social agenda for Latin America (Chávez, 2011).

Recent efforts to implement socialism in the twenty-first century have had an important impact on poverty. According to the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL), 48.2% of the population in Venezuela was living in poverty in 2002, whereas this percentage was 27.8% in 2010 (CEPAL, 2012).

An analysis of income concentration also reveals an impact on distributive inequality: While the wealthiest segment of the population earns 40% of the national income and the poorest segment earns 11% and 15% in countries such as Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, and the Dominican Republic, the lowest levels of concentration of national income exist in Uruguay and Venezuela where the wealthiest part of the population earns 20% of the income and the poorest earns 23% (CEPAL, 2012).

Figure 1 shows the income concentration by deciles expressed as percentages in 18 Latin American countries in 2011. As the figure illustrates, the highest concentration of income exists in countries where the tenth decile (the wealthiest part of the population) owns 40% of the national income (Honduras, Brazil, and Guatemala, among others), whereas the first through fourth deciles earn only 11% of the national income (e.g., Honduras).

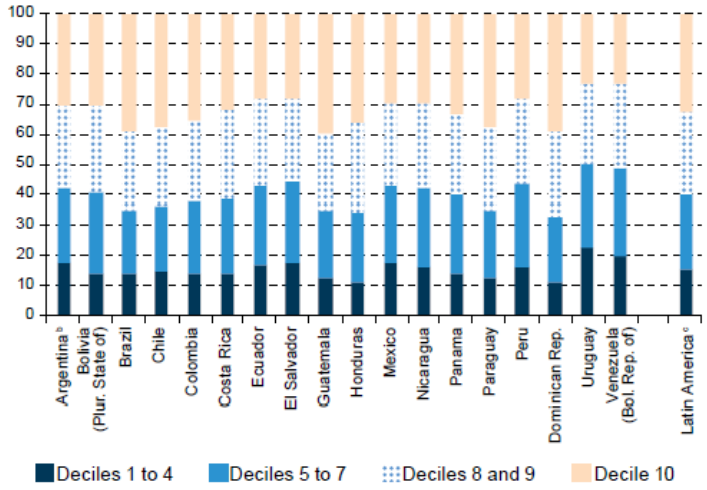

Figure 1. Latin America (18 countries): income distribution by groups of deciles, around 2011. Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), based on special tabulations of data from household surveys conducted in the respective countries as cited in CEPAL, 2012, p. 22.

On the other hand, it is possible to see how in countries such as Venezuela and Uruguay, where the tenth decile earns the minimum amount of national income (among 20% and 22%), the first through fourth deciles (the poorest part of the population) earn 23% of the national income. It is important to note that the first through fourth deciles plus the fifth through seventh deciles represent the sum of 50% of the national income in 2011 in Uruguay and Venezuela. This means that the poorest part of the population owns half of the national income in those countries. It is also important to mention that according to the United Nations Development Programme (2011), its UNDP Human Development Index (expressed as proportions) for Venezuela was 0.623 in 1980, whereas it was 0.735 in 2011. These are some of the data that show the significance of certain

outcomes of the implementation of socialism in Venezuela during the twenty-first century.

It is also important to note some of the context of the Venezuelan project of creating a socialist education system in the twenty-first century. Figure 2 describes Venezuela's national expenditure on education from 1970 to 2004. The red line represents the current expenditure and the blue one the expenditure that reflects the impact of inflation on education. This means that since 1999, in spite of inflation, the public expenditure on the education system has increased in terms of payroll, maintenance costs, etc. For 2004 both reached $793,650,000.00 USD.

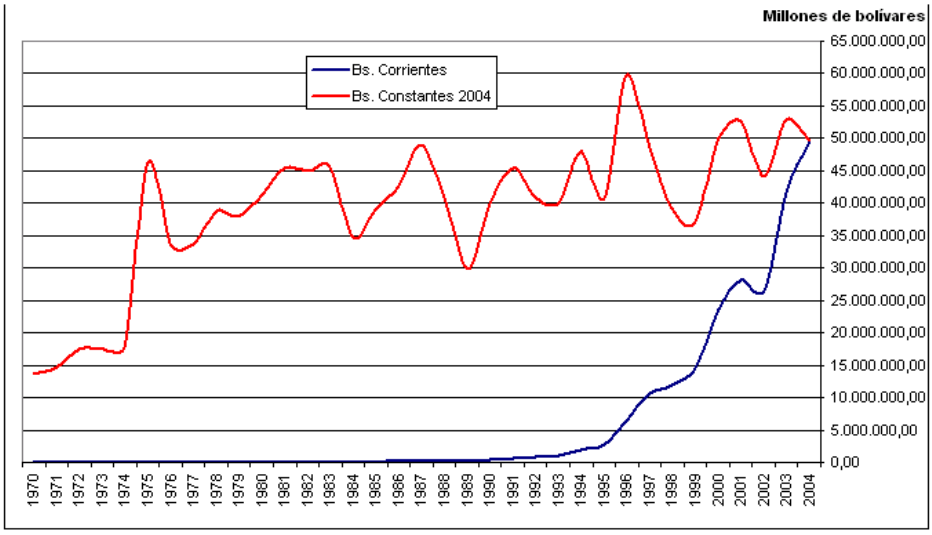

Figure 2. Public Spending in Venezuela 1970-2004. Source: Huerta, 2012.

Figure 3 shows how primary education and high school retention rates in percentages (as opposed to drop out rates) have increased since the first years of the Hugo Chávez administration. This information, in addition to the national expenditure on

education, can give some sense of the importance placed on education in Venezuela during recent years: If the national expenditure in education has increased considerably since 1999 while primary education and high school retention rates have also increased since 2000, this gives some sense of how Chávez's government has supported education. For more details, see the section "Why Elementary Education?"

Figure 3. School retention during the schools years from 2000/2001 to 2010/2011. Source: Ministry of Popular Power for Education of the government of Venezuela, 2014.

At the beginning of Hugo Chávez's administration, the people who had suffered under the neoliberalist dictatorship's economic measures were the population sector to be included in the new non-liberal government (it is important to remember the *Caracazo* as the way in which Caracas's masses stopped neoliberalism in a drastic manner). The

problem is that after 15 years of Bolivarian government, the lines between *Chavistas* and *escuálidos* were no clearer than they were at the beginning of the revolution.

One of the important social actors has been the *Asociación Civil Asamblea de Educación* [Assembly of Education]. This NGO has pointed out many of the defects of Bolivarian education, one of which is explained by Leonardo Carvajal, an important critic of Bolivarian education:

> *Lamentablemente, los autores del malhadado Proyecto Educativo son totalitarios en su concepción y pretenden obligar a la nación a pensar como ellos. Bien pueda Carlos Lanz Rodríguez organizar las capas de su personal ideología inspirándose en "la teología de la liberación, el marxismo, el bolivarianismo, la indianidad y el cimarronismo," pero no tiene derecho a imponernos la particular cosmovisión suya y de su grupo*. (Carvajal, 2006a, p. 211, my translation; Unfortunately, the authors of the doomed Educative Project are totalitarian in their conception, and they intend to compel the nation to think in their way. It is understandable that Carlos Lanz Rodríguez[7] organizes his own ideology according to "the theology of liberation, Marxism, Bolivarianism, indigenousness and the *cimarronismo,*[8],[9] but he does not have the right to impose upon us his and his group's particular cosmovision).

[7] Carlos Lanz Rodríguez has been an important creator of Bolivarian education and an adviser to Hugo Chávez's government.

[8] The Maroon rebellion, or the Afrodescendant fight against European oppression in Latin America, also entails a self-consciousness about the significant role of Africans in the construction of Latin America's identity. Some of the most important cimarronismo leaders have included Bayano in Panama, Zumbí in Brazil, Nat Turner in the United

Besides this quote, the need to recognize Afrodescendant, indigenous, and Latin America identities within the educative national system has originated many types of opinion about it.

The Bolivarian Revolution And Other Factors

One of the most important characteristics of the *Puntofijista* system was the *rentista*, or oil dependence, of the Venezuelan economy because the country's role in the international economic context was to provide oil to international powers. As a result, oil was plundered from Venezuela, and the national oligarchy received certain benefits from this international de facto trade. Both of Carlos Andrés Pérez's presidential administrations from 1974 to 1979 and from 1989 to 1993 exemplify this oil dependence and the neoliberal Venezuelan economy.

From the time when Hugo Chávez took office in 1999, the distribution of wealth caused many confrontations between two plans for Venezuela, which represented an opposition between two models of development: the oil-dependent, neoliberal, oligarchic project and the progressivist, neo-development-popular, communitarian one (Rocha Valencia, 2013). After 15 years of the Bolivarian Revolution, these two projects for Venezuela have been confluent, and the lines separating them are not as clear as they were in the beginning, when Hugo Chávez won the first presidential election. In this sense, there has been a dissolution of borders between right and left (Medina Nuñez,

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States, and Benkos Biohó, Domingo Criollo, and Juan Angola in Colombia, among others. (http://www.banrepcultural.org/blaavirtual/sociologia/estudiosafro/estudiosafro15.htm)

[9] "Ideologo de MinEducación se inspira en Bolívar, Marx y Gramsci," diario El Nacional, 27 de Agosto de 2000, H-1 (as cited in Carvajal & Pantin, 2006, p. 211).

2009). It is important to point out that during the twentieth century the Venezuelan economy has been oil dependent; the difference is that in the decades before the Bolivarian Revolution (*Puntofijismo*) the Venezuelan people had not received the same revenue from oil as they have during the time of the Bolivarian government. Nevertheless, depetrolizing the economy has been one of the national goals on which the Venezuelan people, private organizations, and government all agree.

The role of petroleum activities in the Venezuelan gross domestic product (GDP) has decreased from 7,863,271 in 1997 to 6,741,453 in 2013 (amounts expressed in thousands of bolívares). For its part, non-petroleum economic activity has increased its role from 30,386,126 in 1997 to 48,515,207 in 2013. In 2013 the Venezuelan GDP was composed of 6,741,453 bolívares of non-petroleum economic activity and 48,515,207 of petroleum activity (Banco Central de Venezuela, 2011).

Nevertheless, there are at least two contexts in which to interpret this data about oil. According to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) [National Statistic Institute], the poverty level has decreased significantly from 55.1% of the Venezuelan population in 2003 to 33.9% in 2006 (i.e., the poverty level decreased 21.2% during these years). From one point of view, the Bolivarian government has increased non-petroleum economic activity, and this has influenced the reduction of poverty. A different point of view would posit that the Bolivarian government has not created sustained economic growth for future years, and instead Chávez concentrated political power that allowed him to increase the public expenditure (Osorio Ramírez, 2006).

In addition to oil, the endogenous development or the development of the

domestic market that seems to prioritize the import substitution model (Fregoso Bailón, 2010) aimed to distribute wealth, which elicited many reactions in Venezuela. In November 2001, Hugo Chávez used the *Ley Habilitante* to issue 49 national laws, which had a great impact on the distribution of wealth. As a consequence, in December 2001, businesspeople and the elite organization, *Fedecámaras*, implemented a bosses' lockout, which included the state oil company PDVSA, and this lockout paralyzed the country.

The political opposition increased its power with the support of the media and the national and international right, who led a coup d'état against Hugo Chávez on April 11, 2002. The following day the Venezuelan people came down from the hills of Caracas to protest and demand that Hugo Chávez be restored as president. After a massive protest, the president took office again one day later on April 12, 2002.

Among the 49 national laws of 2001[10] those that stand out are the ones that aimed to democratize property and economic production; these laws sought ways to promote alternatives to traditional business units with the creation of cooperatives and the *Fondo Único Social* [Unique Social Fund] to promote microcredit financing and give priority to small- and medium-sized industry (Lander, 2004). Three of the 49 national laws are representative of the distribution of wealth that has caused continuous international and national confrontation: the *Ley de Pesca and Acuicultura* [Fisheries and Aquaculture Law], the *Ley de Tierras y Desarrollo Agrario* [Law of Lands and Agricultural Development], and the *Ley Orgánica de Hidrocarburos* [Organic Hydrocarbons Law].

[10] These 49 national laws aimed implementing in concrete manner the constitution of 1999.

The main purpose of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Law was giving priority to the domestic market demand and to the protection of the environment. The Law of Lands and Agricultural Development prioritized the rights of peasants in terms of access to land and the constitutional objective of assuring agri-food safety for the nation. This law was primarily meant to challenge large landownership. For its part, the Organic Hydrocarbons Law established state control over hydrocarbons (mainly oil) contrary to what the majority of Latin American countries[11] have done following neoliberal recommendations. Businesspeople labeled these national laws as an attack against private property, which confirmed the statist and communist character of the government's project (Lander, 2004).

The effects of the Bolivarian Revolution have been enormous in continental terms but have been problematic from a local perspective. The international sabotage that has supported Venezuelans' right that has meat the freeze-up of the private sectors of economy as means of restricting food and services to the Venezuelan population. In the absence of non-private international media, the international mass media has mainly depicted the authoritarian aspects of the Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution. After 15 years of government and the loss of Hugo Chávez's leadership, it is difficult to say whether *Chavistas* and their opposition pursue totally different goals. Many sectors of the Venezuelan population think that not all of the *Chavistas* pursue non-capitalist values and actions, and many others emphasize how the international right has increased its

[11] The case of México stands out because it is an oil country just like Venezuela; nevertheless México has recently implemented more national laws that privatize oil in accordance with its neoliberal agenda over the last 34 years.

support of the Venezuelan opposition.

After the Bolivarian government won 12 elections, on December 2, 2007, president Chávez lost his first referendum. The Venezuelan people democratically rejected the proposal of indefinite presidential election, the creation of other systems of property ownership (besides private property), the reduction of the working day, and universal social welfare.[12]

A few years after the first Chávez election, the majority of the people realized that the Bolivarian government was not a solid, unified group who aimed for social justice; however, the Venezuelan population still recognized the risk of enabling the right to regain power. After Chávez passed away, the Venezuelan opposition brought the Bolivarian government to a close once and for all, and what has helped the opposition is a unity among candidates and the creation of a political proposal instead of just a critique of the government (Saltalamacchia, 2008), but few people even within Venezuela would not call into question the existence of a millionaire intrusion of the international right against the Bolivarian Revolution (Golinger, 2006; Golinger & Migus, 2009).

In recent years and in the present day, many social conflicts have appeared during the administration of Nicolas Maduro. It is difficult to say that there is a vast majority of people who think there is a left or a right national project because the traditional distinctions between these projects are now blurry for many Venezuelans, but there are also many people who defend the Bolivarian Revolution or who defend the opposition's

[12] The Hugo Chávez proposal said in Article 86 that everyone has the right to social welfare whether or not they are capable of contributing to the social welfare system.

neoliberal agenda. Within Venezuela, Maduro's government meant many things and not only oppression or freedom.

Bolivarian Education and Critical Pedagogy

It is important to explain a few other social factors that pertain to the aforementioned statistics. After Chávez's call for the construction of socialism of the twenty-first century, the National Development Simón Bolívar Project and the Organic Law on Education of 2009 were instituted. The latter defines the meaning of Bolivarian education in an interesting way. It is important to note how Article 15 of this act defines some of the educational aims in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, such as the social pursuit of happiness by means of the construction of an inclusive socioeconomic structure and the creation of a new humanistic, social, and Indigenous productive economy in Venezuela. This article also expresses, among other aims, the importance of recognizing an Indigenous, Afrodescendant, Latin American, Caribbean, and universal identity of the education in the construction of popular power. Article 14 expresses that the basis of education in Venezuela can be found in the ideas of "our Liberator" Simón Bolívar (Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación, 2009, p. 401) and Simón Rodríguez and in the strands of social humanism (Imen, 2011a).

In this context, it is important to note the connection between Bolivarian thought and the Marxist perspective. One of the central arguments of this theoretical connection in Bolivarian education emphasizes that it is possible to create a new kind of socialism without exactly copying the European experience, a proposal that the decolonial perspective aimed to problematize and that poses an epistemological challenge for a

socialist education system. In particular, Lander (2006) has rethought the connections among Eurocentrism, colonialism, and Marxism, proposing interesting new takes on Marxism in Venezuela and the rest of Latin America.

In a similar vein, Cesar Salgado (2014) explained how in the first decade of the Cuban Revolution the Cuban writer Edmundo Desnoes used James Joyce's work to anticipate the postcolonial intellectual efforts of the 1990s. It is interesting that "Desnoes reads New World poets such as José Martí and Pablo Neruda as examples of a unified continental Latin American mindset that promotes a '*nuestra América*' vs. North America, us vs. them, anti-colonial ethos" (p. 9). Martí's influence on the effort to construct an anti-colonial ethos for Latin America is principally based on his essay-manifesto "*Nuestra América*" [Our America] published in January 1891 in New York and México. "*Nuestra América*" represents the greatest manifesto for the unity of Latin America since Simón Bolívar's *Carta de Jamaica*. In this manifesto, Martí "roundly criticized the continental republics for maintaining the characteristics they had as colonies and for imposing European and U.S. models without considering a land's own history, traditions, social psychology, and identity" (Rodríguez, 2012, p. 519). Perhaps it is for this reason that the Bolivarian National Curriculum explicitly addresses José Martí's work as a part of the theoretical basis (Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación Popular, 2007a).

An important point emerges in talking about the construction of a socialist education system in the twenty-first century: it is common to hear that if socialism "did not work" in Europe, then socialism will not work in any part of the world. This idea

reinforces Europe as the norm (of knowledge and practice). It is akin to saying that the history of Europe is the history of the world (actually, this is how "universal history" is taught in many schools), the heroes of Europe are the heroes of the world, the narratives successful in Europe (modernity, enlightenment, democracy, progress, law) are the narratives of success for the world, and the European narratives of failure (Soviet socialism) are the narratives of failure for the world. In this sense, achieving the epistemological independence of America and also its material independence is part of the tension that the education system of socialism in the twenty-first century faces in the experience of Bolivarian education in Venezuela.

Critical pedagogy will enrich itself by taking into account the "Third World"'s educative practices not only as "educative experiences" or only as "social movements" but also as a basis for the non-Western hegemonic philosophical perspective that has prevailed as the philosophical basis of critical pedagogy.

Critical pedagogy about class has continued developing important works, but the Western modernist and colonial intellectual perspective did not allow many Western scholars to take into consideration the non-Western philosophy of critical pedagogy that emerged during the second part of the twentieth century. I refer to the work of Latin American educators who continued developing a non-Western philosophical rubric, such as Carlos Nuñez Hurtado (1971, 1985, 1992, 1996), Oscar Jara (1984, 1992, 1998, 2001, 2007), and Adriana Puiggros (1980), among others. Both individual educators and many Latin America social movements in instituting *Educación Popular* [Popular Education] have continued the work of Freire's second invitation of oppressed peoples to construct

knowledge in their struggle for liberation. Examples include Cuba's *Educación Popular*, which has created innovative pedagogical perspectives over the last 53 years, after the beginning of the economic blockade; the *Comunidades Eclesiales de Base* and *Educacion Popular* in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Panamá as survival mechanisms during military invasions of the 1980s and part of 1990s; the educational project of the Sandinista Revolution since 1979 and some of the 1980s; the *Educación Popular* before the coup d'état against Salvador Allende in Chile; and the educational innovative practices that people used to survive and create critical thinking during the following dictatorships: Jorge Rafael Videla in Argentina, 1976–1983; Uruguay, 1973–1984; Hugo Banzer in Bolivia, 1971–1978; Alfredo Stroessner in Paraguay, 1954–1989, among others in the context of the Cold War. The Western modernist and colonial perspective has denied the philosophical character of these intellectual efforts by interpreting them as only social movements, when they are, in fact, intellectual movements.

With the education system of socialism in the twenty-first century emerging as a part of a social revolution, the Bolivarian Revolution studying and problematizing the philosophical proposal of this educational strand might enrich the philosophical discussion on critical pedagogy, because the purpose of this study is to analyze this Latin American perspective as a philosophical basis.

If critical pedagogy has been enriched by Western modernist thought and if it includes a decolonial intellectual perspective, then critical pedagogy can also be enriched by what the Western colonial tradition of thought has failed to see: the poor subjects of

Latin American are not merely folklore characters but rather creators of a philosophy of education.

For instance, the National Organic Law of Education of Venezuela in Article 6 establishes that the state must use education to promote the Afrodescendant and Indigenous identities of the nation. In what way can critical pedagogy enrich itself by analyzing these kinds of educational practices and studying such practices from a philosophical viewpoint?

This new kind of education poses a philosophical challenge particularly because it problematizes the Western canon of philosophy in which there is no place for Latin American thinkers because their countries have been historically thought of as only colonies. It is difficult for the hegemony of the Western tradition of thought to consider Latin America as a place where philosophers can be created from their know Latin American individuals.

Perhaps Bolivarian education can enrich new and alternative paths of critical pedagogy. For instance, De Lissovoy (2008) addressed interesting options related to how education challenges power as the ethos of oppression. He pointed out the need to build a "compound standpoint" on education, which in turn would allow for understanding "epistemological-political formations situated in specific social experiences rather than simply worldviews—and that in this way we can better appreciate the internal validity of each perspective as well as its limits" (p. 51). That means refusing universalistic truths, but it also represents an opportunity to bring together different perspectives that shed light on various facets of the process of domination. Bolivarian education has to be

analyzed using these kinds of concepts in order to determine whether or not it offers a different philosophical basis for critical pedagogy.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Main question:

What is the philosophical basis of the Bolivarian education system?

Subquestions:

a) How can Dussel's philosophy of liberation help us understand the cultural, political, and epistemological orientation of the Bolivarian education system?

b) What philosophical possibilities does the Bolivarian education system suggest for the philosophy of critical pedagogy?

If the socialism of the twenty-first century has been an emergent proposal during the last decades, the philosophy of the poor of the "Third World" started to appear as an original philosophy to see the reality of the oppressed and colonized: the philosophy of liberation. Enrique Dussel is the creator of the philosophy of liberation and one of the most important figures of liberation theology (1985, 1990, 2007, 2009, etc.). This philosophy has demonstrated that not only does Latin America produce *café* and bananas; it is also a land where individuals can create philosophy from their colonized nations. The philosophy of liberation is the philosophy that shows how the oppressed peoples of the world[13] are social actors in the construction of philosophy. As Dussel has explained

[13] As a Latin American philosopher, Dussel has explained in most of his work that the philosophy of liberation applies particularly to Latin America but also to Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Asia.

throughout his work, the philosophy of liberation is the result of the process by which oppressed peoples have not only fought against empires and defended themselves from empires but, in doing so, also have created a philosophy.

The education of the socialism of the twenty-first century has to offer not only a distinctive discourse but also a different categorical map (Dussel, 1980/1985) in order to convey new concepts to read a new non-colonial reality. If Bolivarian education is not creating a non-colonial conceptual reference, this kind of education is not proposing new paths for oppressed Latin American peoples.

Enrique Dussel has pointed out how many social movements have led to the creation of philosophy, but seeing this requires taking a decolonial stance. This is why it is important to research whether or not there are aspects of the philosophy of liberation in the Bolivarian education, or if perhaps the latter only takes for granted the Western philosophical basis of critical pedagogy. If the Bolivarian education has and proposes as its basis a philosophy of liberation, or in other words, the philosophy of the colonized, perhaps we are in the presence of a distinctive philosophical foundation for critical pedagogy.

The purpose of this research is to analyze documents containing important elements of the theoretical proposal of the Bolivarian education. Specifically, the following documents will be studied: the Simón Bolívar's *Carta de Jamaica* (Jamaica Letter) and *Discurso de Angostura* [The Angostura Address] as the core theoretical text for Bolivarian education, and Simón Rodríguez's *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* (1842) [Lights and Social Virtues] and *Sociedades Americanas* (1828) [American Societies].

The curricular documents that will be analyzed are the *Curriculum Nacional Bolivariano* (2007) [National Bolivarian Curriculum], the *Currículo del Subsistema de Educación Primaria Bolivariana* (2007) [Bolivarian Elementary School subsystem's Curriculum], the text *La Planificación Educativa en el Subsistema de Educación Primaria* (2012) [Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem] from the Ministry of Popular Power for Popular Education, and the sixth-grade textbook *Venezuela y su gente, Ciencias sociales para sexto grado* (2013) [Venezuela and Its People, Social Sciences for Sixth Grade].

These documents will be studied in light of coloniality of power (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b) perspective and Dussel's philosophy of liberation as explained in Chapter 3 about methodology.

WHY ELEMENTARY EDUCATION?

As explained in the previous section, a few curricular documents related to elementary education in Venezuela will be analyzed. First, it is important to explain why out of all the educational levels elementary education will be the level studied.

In 2000, according to the United Nations Millennium Declaration, all 189 United Nations member states committed to help achieve the eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015: (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) achieve universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality rate; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) develop a global partnership for development (United Nations, General Assembly, 2000).

The second of these Millennium Development Goals is about providing universal primary education. The reason is because primary education is deeply correlated to other social and economic factors of people's lives. In Latin America, access to primary education determines a person's financial situation. According to CEPAL (2012), half of Latin American adults (aged 25 to 65) who were living in indigence had not completed primary education.

Table 1

Students Enrollment in Venezuela, 2002–2005

	2002–2003	2003–2004	2004–2005
Preschool	882.095	984.224	1.053.790
Primary education, grades 1–9	4.786.445	6.286.525	6.310.322
High school and college	512.371	1.259.981	1.383.075

Note. Source: *Ministerio de Educación y Deportes and Sistema Integrado de Indicadores Sociales para Venezuela* (SISOV) [Ministry of Education and Sports and System of Social Indicators for Venezuela]; SISOV as cited in María Gabriela Ponce, 2010, p. 87).

Table 1 indicates the number of Venezuelan students enrolled in school according to educational level from 2002 to 2005. María Gabriela Ponce (2010) also described how the average number of school years completed by a population of people 24 years of age or older is 9.8 school years for those who are not poor and 5.2 school years for those who are chronically poor. This means that financially stable Venezuelans have completed

twice the number of school years than have those who are chronically poor. If the huge majority of enrolled students are those who attend primary education (6.310.322 versus 1.053.790 in preschool or 1.383.075 in high school and college) and if non-poor Venezuelans have twice the number of years of schooling than the chronically poor have it seems that primary education affords the greatest opportunity to acquire further schooling, which in turn determines Latin Americans' chances of living in indigence or not.

It is possible to infer from these statistics the connection between the number of years in elementary school and the possibility of being poor or not. Two other indicators can reinforce the importance of this association: the rates of return to elementary education and the degree of attendance in formal education institutions in Venezuela.

For those who have completed the sixth grade in elementary school, their rate of return was 12% in 2002. This means that those who completed elementary school can expect 12% more income compared to the income of those who do not complete the sixth grade. For those who have completed the ninth grade, their rate of return was 11%; rate of return of 10% for those who completed high school, 8% for non-concluded college, and 14% for college graduation (Huerta, 2002). As can be seen, the elementary school level explains a huge part of the individuals' rate of return (12%) just before higher education (14%).

Another factor that reinforces the correlation between the number of completed elementary school years and future income is the degree of attendance to formal education institutions in Venezuela. Attendance of formal institutions in 2002 decreased

precipitously after completion of the sixth grade (between 11 and 12 years old; Huerta, 2002). This means that elementary school is virtually "the chance" of attending a formal education institution, and is the level of education that the majority of people have the opportunity to attend in Venezuela.

Primary education is a major determining factor in people's futures. This is why the international goal of providing universal primary education for every person in the world is the only educative millennium goal for 2015 addressed by the United Nations. In Latin America, the completion of elementary education highly influences whether someone will live in indigence or not. For the majority of people in Venezuela, completing elementary school provides almost the only chance of acquiring any kind of formal education. It is because of its importance that elementary education will be the level to be studied. In addition, the Bolivarian education system of Venezuela (and of twenty-first-century socialism) introduces the core subject of endogenous development in the official curriculum since elementary school level.

Chapter Two: Review Of The Literature

And Theoretical Framework

LITERATURE REVIEW

1) The Education of the Socialism of the twenty-first century in The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

As I explained in Chapter 1, my study will focus in particular on curricular documents related to elementary education. However, my analysis of theoretical documents and my discussion of the contemporary political context relate to the educational system in general. For this reason, the literature review below considers higher education as well as grade school.

Higher Education in Context

Latin America entered the twenty-first century in the context of many tensions among neoliberalism, the technocratic logic of efficiency that replaces universal social rights (health, education, etc.), and the social capital of the poor. In the last 30 years educational policies have emerged from a political environment that has included the legitimization of regulating privatized social security, health, and education services (Leiva, 2008). Nevertheless, other interesting educative proposals address the continental repercussion of constructing Bolivarian education as a way to contest the context described. Muhr (2010, 2013) explained in great detail the connections between the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) and higher education in Latin America. Composed of Antigua and Barbuda, the Republic of Bolivia, the Republic

of Cuba, the Commonwealth of Dominica, the Republic of Ecuador, the Republic of Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, ALBA is a continental effort to construct a counter-hegemonic project in Latin America (Preciado Coronado & Uc, 2012). With regards to education, this has meant the promotion of the "Higher Education For All" (HEFA) policy as a part of the educational effort of ALBA to dismantle the "competitive advantage" with the "cooperative advantage" in accordance with the goal of promoting endogenous development as a way to construct socialism in the twenty-first century. Muhr (2010) used Leal's (2006) explanation of some of the philosophical contributions of the Bolivarian educational project: "Three dimensions can be identified in the HEFA policy: the philosophical (a 'new socialist ethics'), the quantitative ('access for all'), and the qualitative ('social relevance')" (Leal cited in Muhr 2010, p 10).

In the same vein, Leal Chacón (2013) analyzed the extent to which socialism in the twenty-first century is a political and pedagogical act. As established in Article 103 of the 1999 Constitution of Venezuela, higher education is a social right for every person in that country. Leal Chacón (2013) discussed how understanding education as a social right in Venezuela has entailed a new popular movement of poor people, which in turn points to the need to recognize that people as well as academia are a source of knowledge.

One of the most important Bolivarian educational goals has been dismantling notions such as competitiveness, corruption, and the consequent illicit enrichment. To achieve this goal, many educational actions, drawing from anti-imperialist and Bolivarian thought, have connected universities with cooperatives in Venezuela in order to link a

socialist economy with socialist education (Jiménez, 2010). As a result of state educational policies, during the years 1999–2004 there were gains in the expansion of higher education schooling of 60.7% (Bravo Jauregui, 2006). Regarding the university education model for Venezuela in the framework of twenty-first-century socialism, the Organic Law on Education of 2009 and the Simón Bolívar National Project have played an outstanding role in the project of dismantling the capitalist and functionalist model of higher education, which represents a cognitive-instrumental model of education that only meets the demands of a capitalist and exclusionary society (Pineda, 2011).

Within the Bolivarian higher education project, Mission Sucre has been another key comprehensive educative policy. Mission Sucre was enacted in 2003 to provide free mass tertiary education, eliminating screening and providing scholarships to the poorest sectors of the Venezuelan population. Mission Sucre has played an interesting role in the significant decline in returns to university education in Venezuela. Specifically, an exogenous rise in university enrollment leads to an increase in the supply of skilled labor. Without a matching increase in demand, returns to university education are uncertain. Gonzalez and Uwaifo Oyelereb (2011) found that "the average returns to education declined by 3.1 percentage points over 2002–2008" (p. 1349). Nevertheless, Mission Sucre has overcome the condition of exclusion in the Venezuelan education subsystem of higher education, and this has meant an incorporation of people who previously had not been admitted to university education. For instance, 65% or more of Mission Sucre students come from lower class strata (Peña Ruiz, Parra Olivares, & Méndez de Souki, 2009), and Mission Sucre has tackled the social debt on higher education, increasing

student enrollment by 220% from 1999 to 2009 (D'Amario, 2009). The former has also meant the introduction of new forms of assessment in classrooms that aim to dismantle exclusionary forms of accountability in higher education, in line with Bolívar and Rodríguez's thought (Corredor, Corredor, Becerra, Gladys, & Useche, 2005). In addition to this, Mission Sucre has de-centered the universities' power by implementing the municipilization of higher education, which means providing teaching within the poor students' neighborhoods and communities, making university content connect with their local problems. In this manner, the idea of the university and its knowledge is problematized (D'Amario, 2009).

Elementary education

After the meeting of the National Constituent Assembly and Chávez's promotion of the new constitution, social mobilization instituted an Educative Constituent, which produced a *Proyecto Educativo Nacional*. This National Educational Project targeted educational institutions as spaces to be transformed, and elementary education as the foundational educative level was one of the first spaces to be questioned. It is important to review the literature to foster an understanding of some of the changes that Bolivarian education has implemented.

Following a review of research (in both English or Spanish) on elementary education in Venezuela, the following literature review on Venezuelan elementary education is interesting in that although several studies cover a wide variety of topics (e.g., the history of elementary education in Venezuela, TICs, intercultural education), there is a special emphasis on the daily problems that teachers encounter in their work.

Elementary education before Bolivarian schools

Historicizing elementary education is important especially in terms of understanding the breakdown that Bolivarian education represents in relation to the past of Venezuela. Even though talking about the history of elementary education in Venezuela could entail a huge discussion, there is an interesting connection between liberal ideals and the role of the state in the construction of the elementary educational system since the sixteenth century (Uzcátegui, 2006, 2008). It is important to note the role of education in the construction of Venezuela as a republic. For instance, the *Códigos de Instrucción Pública de Venezuela* [Codes of Public Instruction] between 1843 and 1897 (Rivero Hidalgo, 2011) offer a revealing account of elementary education in the construction of Venezuela as a republic because these codes show the colonial content and organizational structure of elementary education mainly in Caracas where the principal objective for education was promoting the liberal ideal of being a republic. The next step was addressing the connection between elementary education and the construction of citizenship in the process of consolidating the nation-state in Venezuela between 1811 and 1920 (Vázquez de Ferrer, 2009). Liberal notions of science, progress, and civility, as opposed to the intrinsic state of barbarism in Venezuela, were the key concepts that guided the national regulation of educational content for elementary schools at that time (Vázquez de Ferrer, 2009). At this stage of the process, schools suffered from colonial content and organization but then liberal ideas of progress were implemented for the creation of Venezuela as a republic.

The next stage is the phase in which elementary education becomes compulsory and the state's duty (Uzcátegui, 2008). It is important to mention that the notion of social rights

was created at the beginning of the twentieth century (Marshall & Bottomore, 2005). During this time, the idea of education as a social right emerged. In Venezuela this phenomenon is reflected in the *Ley Orgánica de Educación* [Organic Law of Education] of 1948 and the curriculum *El Ciclo Básico Común y Ciclo Diversificado* [The Basic Cycle and Common Diversified Cycle], which addressed the most important national efforts in terms of elementary education and made education compulsory for all children through the age of 11 years through the *Decreto N° 120 del 13 de agosto de 1969.* In addition to this, the *Ley Orgánica de Educación* [Organic Law of Education] of 1980 is the direct antecedent of Bolivarian education, and also regulated elementary education in Venezuela. According to this national law, elementary education did not aim to be Bolivarian or revolutionary, but the law recognized the state as the principal provider of education at this level.

It is significant that some years before the Bolivarian Revolution, the didactic proposal of *proyectos pedagógicos de aula* [classroom teaching projects] had been implemented in elementary schools between 1996 and 1997 (Rivas, 2001), before Chávez was elected president in 1999. In this brief history of Bolivarian schools, it is important to notice that before Chávez, elementary education aimed to be Bolivarian but not revolutionary or seeking a socialist education, but it recognized the state as the principal provider of elementary education.

Intercultural education

The educational relationship between Indigenous languages and intercultural interactions with Indigenous peoples, such as the Yanomami, Jivi, Piaroa, Ye'kuana, and

Kurripak among others in Venezuela (Monsonyi, 1982, 2003, 2004), has been the most important factor that has helped to improve intercultural education in Venezuela. In other words, not separating education from linguistics as a cultural construction has been one of the most important factors to define the agenda of intercultural education.

It is important to mention how in the state of Amazonas intercultural education has gone through an interesting process that has shifted from multiethnic, pluricultural, and plurilingual education to a focus on decolonizing education for Indigenous peoples, especially in elementary schools (Moreno Chirinos, 2010). In this process, some cosmic myths of ethnic Ye'Kuana, Yukpa, and Yanomami indigenous peoples have been transcribed as children's literature by private publishers (Monsalvo, Salas, & González, 2010), which intend to use the transcribed stories as educational material. In this sense, elementary education for Indigenous peoples has tried to be conscious of new ways of colonizing their cosmovisions.

Teachers in elementary schools

It is interesting that this literature review uncovered so many studies on the problems of elementary schools teachers. It is revealing that in the "Third World" teachers cope with challenges such as lacking adequate health care and having to work additional jobs. In Latin America, elementary school teachers have more than one job (Murillo & Román, 2013). The database of UNESCO's Second Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study, which has information on more than 3,000 schools and more than 8,000 teachers in Latin America, shows that one out of every three teachers has a second paid job, usually a teaching job in another school (Murillo & Román, 2013). In Venezuela, 59% of

male elementary school teachers have a second job, and the same is true of 32% of female teachers (Bruni, Ramos, & González as cited in Murillo & Román, 2013). A second job means teaching private lessons or working at an additional private school, while some teachers own a small business or work in the commercial sector. These labor conditions have an important impact on teachers' daily classroom performance. It is also possible to link these labor conditions to some of the teachers' health problems such as voice disorders (Escalona, 2006) and fatigue.

Shared decision-making can create an incentive to improve the conditions in which elementary schools teachers perform their work. In some urban schools in Trujillo State of Venezuela, participative management and social promotion of teachers and directors have been implemented to identify whether constructing a horizontal school management achieves one of the aims of the recent educational reforms (Bastidas & Pacheco, 2011). It is important to note that teachers have indicated that vertical and centralized management prevail in their schools even though official accounts talk about different ways to govern elementary schools (Bastidas & Pacheco, 2011).

Some scholarship addresses the topic of didactic improvements to be developed by teachers. For instance, didactic programs have been implemented to help mathematics achievement by prospective elementary school math teachers. Clemente (1982) showed the results of a process of designing and evaluating the effectiveness of a content and methods approach for teaching mathematics to 88 prospective elementary school teachers in Venezuela. This didactic proposal consists of a combination of mathematics lectures and

demonstrations to illustrate operations and properties related to topics such as geometry, whole numbers, and rational numbers.

Contrasting an empiric-realistic with a socioconstructivist approach to science, Plonczak (2008) found that familiar contexts build teachers' confidence to teach science. Plonczak also researched elementary teachers' perceptions about science. Her study focused on the attitudes of elementary school teachers in Caracas, Venezuela, and their relationship to science. She made the surprising discovery that teachers were not aware of science as an objective or a neutral field of knowledge to be taught to elementary school children. Plonczak developed workshops in which she considered teachers' discourse in relation to what science means for them and how they can improve their work in teaching science. The study's data were the teacher's discourses on descriptions of an ideal science class and semi-structured interviews.

Art is also an area of learning in which teachers face challenges. De Almeida (1994) covered the lack of human and material resources to teach and address art in elementary schools. She conducted a research study in which she interviewed several teachers to obtain information directly from the teachers about the elementary art education program in the city of Caracas. School administrators were also asked to distribute questionnaires to teachers to acquire information about human resources and professional development in the learning area of art and about the commitment to the visual arts program, as well as to obtain their opinions regarding the art curriculum in the elementary schools, especially in terms of the aesthetics in the art and art history curriculum. Some of the findings indicate that the provision of supplies and textbooks and the visual and human resources to teach art

were very weak in the schools that were part of the Caracas study. It was also found that the necessary training and professional development for teachers in the area of art were also weak, resulting in a lack of hands-on activities in classrooms.

Teaching in Bolivarian schools involves many challenges. Although being a teacher in a Bolivarian school has meant implementing endogenous development as an educational practice (Girardi, 2006), it also has meant being a community teacher in the context of the complexity and multidisciplinary approaches within Bolivarian curriculum (Marcano Rodríguez, 2011) because Bolivarian schools ask teachers to be integrated into the community. That means working from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. instead of from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and implementing *Proyectos Pedagógicos Integrales Comunitarios* (PEIC) [Community Integral Pedagogic Projects] and the *Proyecto de Aprendizaje* (PA) [Learning Project]. All of these projects mean relating educational content to local problems. All these changes have been problematic for teachers because most of them have only received a symbolic salary although their workday was increased.

Textbooks

One of the areas where Bolivarian elementary education has been problematic is the creation of new textbooks. For instance, Ferreira and Mayorga (2010) talked about the absence of a suitable structure in mathematic textbooks due to the lack of an appropriate evaluation from the Ministry of Popular Power for Education. Ferreira and Mayorga (2010) proposed an evaluative instrument consisting of a format type scale presentation at an estimated scale in order to measure educational material about mathematics. Furthermore, the representation of citizenship transmitted by Venezuelan primary textbooks has been

analyzed (Arteaga, 2009), particularly to problematize the way in which political parties, social institutions, political leaders, and historical characters are portrayed. These kinds of discussions are relevant because they have revealed that educative material and the language that it uses are not neutral.

It is significant that the State Department of People's Power for Education, Culture and Sports, in Venezuela's Mérida State, published an academic article entitled "*Proyecto Escuelas Alternativas*" (2010) [Alternative School's Project] in a scholarly journal (*Educere*) where the government of Mérida sets guidelines for developing textbooks and other didactic material at elementary schools. This entity of the Venezuelan government proposes a school network to help teachers share textbooks to develop specific competencies in children according to regional peculiarities. Actually, the document suggests creating certain kinds of schools in order to develop educational competencies in elementary school students, e.g., creating ecological schools for improving ecological consciousness and schools for developing radio production, specifically for creating popular and community journalism.

Some scholarship problematizes other themes such as the concept of writing as covered in elementary sixth-grade textbooks in Venezuela (Mujica, Díaz, & Arnáez, 2008) and in the proposals laid out in the Programs of Language and Literature and the National Basic Curriculum. As Mujica et al. pointed out, textbooks assume writing to be a cognitive process, but students visualize the writing as a conceptual process, not as a procedural one. This mismatch is significant to children's learning process.

Furthermore, the topic of national identity in textbooks is also discussed, particularly the Caribbean identity of Venezuela. Arteaga Mora and Aleman Guillen (2007) problematized how the Caribbean region is portrayed in educational terms from ethnic, historical, cultural, and political perspectives. In this way, textbooks teach the country's Caribbean identity as a part of the ideological cultural agenda of the state.

This literature review is interesting in that an evaluation of studies on Bolivarian elementary education reveals the working conditions of teachers to be a recurrent theme. Second, there is a significant lack of research about the philosophical dimension of Bolivarian basic education; in other words, it is has been difficult to find a philosophical study about this education system that emerges from the construction of philosophy of education from the colonized territories'authors. This shows the need to research the philosophical dimension of these kinds of educational practices.

2) Literature On Official National Curriculum Frameworks

There are significant efforts to study official national curricula in many parts of the world. With regard to member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), it is interesting how "programmes of study for public lower-secondary education were designed by the central authorities in 16 of the 26 OECD education systems" (Kärkkäinen, 2012, p. 17). These data show the prevalence of a prescriptive central curriculum that places the initiative for educational innovations at the level of the central administration, an approach to curriculum that differs from the decentralized curriculum position that provides schools and local communities with room to generate their own educational curricular proposals.

Reflecting on the case of Venezuela in light of these perspectives, it could be said that the Chávez government initiated Bolivarian educational reforms in the form of a prescriptive central curriculum, but after a few years Chávez's supporters and opponents applied a curricular approach that provides schools more independence to create curriculum changes (Imen, 2011a, 2011b; Rivas, 2007).

Some scholarship has addressed the need for theoretical discussion on national curricula. For example, the main stance in Australia over the past 30 or 40 years has been to discuss the content and sequence of educational subjects by grade level. According to Brennan (2011), constructing a national curriculum in Australia is too comprehensive of an enterprise to discuss only the content and sequence of educational subjects by grade level because this may result in talking about a national syllabus instead of creating a national curriculum. This is why she affirmed that curriculum has to deal with definitions, philosophical references, and theorized and articulated views of curriculum.

In Mexico, educational competencies as a theoretical basis to develop official curricula appeared in the 1990s, especially within official technical education institutions, and were used as a theoretical foundation to construct the official kindergarten curricula of 2004, middle school curricula in 2009, elementary school curricula in 2009, and higher education level curricula in the school year 2008–2009 (Andrade Cázares & Hernández Gallardom, 2010). The problematic aspect of educational competencies has been their close relationship with the educational purpose of producing skilled labor in Mexico within the context of the liberation of markets.

In Venezuela, the theoretical basis of its official curriculum from 1700s to the

1800s was positivism, and in the twentieth century developmentalist and dependency theory influenced the creation of national curricula (Mora García, 2004). Since 1999 theoretical discussion of the national curriculum has been problematic because the socialist perspective of education starting from Bolívar and Rodríguez has caused a mix of opposition and great support from teachers, parents, and students (Carvajal & Pantin, 2006; Bravo Jauregui, 2006).

In other countries, such as Australia, theoretical discussion of the national curricula has meant researching the way in which the curricula incorporate relevant concepts, such as in Australia where state-based documentation has tried to include the concept of "inclusivity." Berlach and Chambers (2010) found that the subject of English incorporates the concept of inclusivity more in Australia, whereas this concept is less addressed in the sciences and history.

In Venezuela, the incorporation of concepts such as neoliberalism, Bolívar's and Simón Rodríguez's thoughts on education, cooperativism, socialism, endogenous development, among others, into the national curricula meant that the national curricula was released eight years after Chávez took office.

Some scholarship has studied specific curriculum content, which, despite the fact of being explicitly about only content, shows the close relationship between content and its theoretical basis. For example, in Argentina there is uncertainty among teachers due to the incorporation of the dictatorship era as educational content into the history curriculum. Some teachers avoid this content and others do not know how to apply it (González, 2008). On the other hand, in England, the absence of technical definitions and

clear guidelines in the English official curriculum results in differing levels of metalinguistic knowledge among teachers in the United Kingdom (Paterson, 2010). In the area of history, McKeich (2009) and Hincks (2009) discussed the benefits of incorporating Australia's indigenous accounts into the national curriculum. McKeich (2009) described how a new history curriculum is a great opportunity to reconfigure the stolen histories of indigenous peoples in the national curriculum. For his part, Hincks (2009) studied other official documents—the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (December 2008), the Shape of the Australian Curriculum: History (May 2009), and Curriculum Design (June 2009)—in order to offer an analysis of what can be included in the Australian educational debate, which had previously excluded Indigenous voices.

In the case of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the struggle over official curriculum content has been intense. One of the discussion points has been transforming Bolivarian curricular content by incorporating the notion of Venezuela as a multiethnic and pluricultural nation (Morán-Beltrán & Méndez-Reyes, 2009). Other points of discussion have been the organization of contents into Bolivarian Community Schools Projects to emphasize the need of awakening students to their local problems (Sansevero de Suárez, Lúquez de Camacho, & Fernández de Celayarán, 2006) and the dispute over Venezuela's history in the national curricula (Carvajal & Pantin, 2006).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The following is a description of the theoretical framework that will be used to analyze the philosophical implications of the education system of the Bolivarian education. Because this new kind of education claims to fight against colonialism and capitalism, the perspective of coloniality of power (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b) and the philosophy of liberation (Dussel, 1978, 1985/1980, 1990, 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 2007, 2009) will guide the analysis. Coloniality of power (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b) as a recent Latin American epistemological strand aims to problematize the Western canon of thought, while Dussel's philosophy of liberation has opened a space for the periphery's philosophies within the hegemonic philosophical perspective.

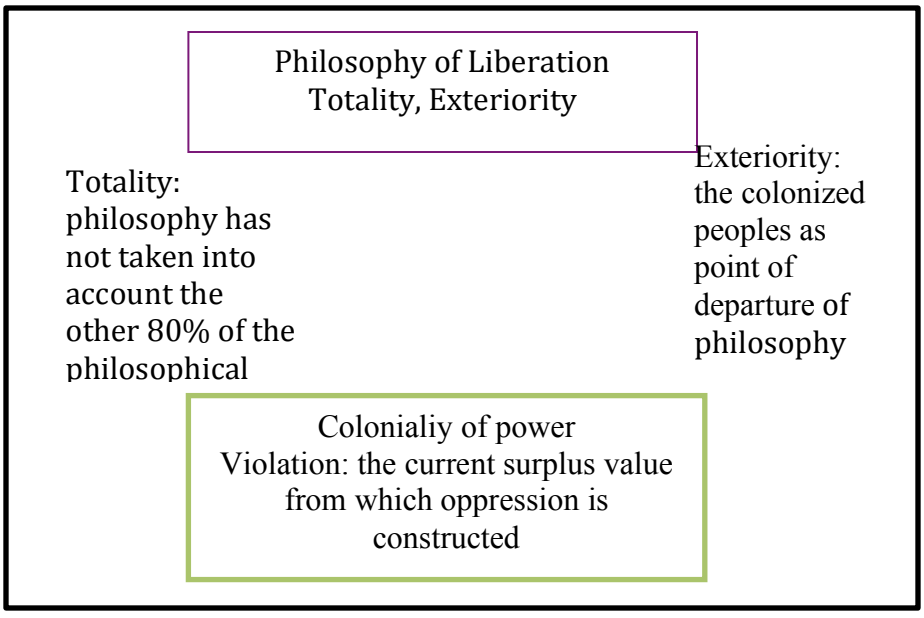

Figure 4. Theoretical framework.

As this section explains, this framework seeks to assume a theoretical perspective to study distinctive educational philosophies of education (not only practices) such as the Bolivarian one.

This project is not mainly about Hugo Chávez or his government; it is principally about the challenge of conceiving that colonized people in the periphery or "Third World" can construct philosophy in their struggle for liberation. The global international context has focused its criticism on Chávez's particular way of confronting the world's empires and private media, but this fails to examine the philosophy that the Bolivarian Revolution claims to advance. The latter has created a whole Latin American sense of emancipation that has supported the revolutions in Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Paraguay in recent years. The fact that the Bolivarian Revolution has not based the construction of its education system on French or German educators is noteworthy. Nevertheless, the creation of new categories to study and to run education in the Bolivarian proposal has suffered from the masculinist political image of Hugo Chávez, the contradictions and corruption within the Bolivarian government, and the disproportionate intrusion of millionaires and the international right against the Bolivarian effort to create a non-neoliberal Latin America (Golinger, 2006; Golinger & Migus, 2009).

Currently, the Bolivarian Revolution and the opposition's wrongdoing, respectively, force political analysis to be delicate. Nevertheless, it is worth analyzing what the Bolivarian Revolution has achieved in terms of seeking its own philosophical constructions. In philosophical terms, the Bolivarian Revolution has meant a call for an

Indigenous, Afrodescendant, Caribbean, and Latin American identity for Venezuela and the rest of Latin America. Within this context, it is necessary to construct alternative categories using a compound standpoint (De Lissovoy, 2008) or a holistic theoretical apparatus that enables an alternative philosophical discourse and to keep in mind that "to be different, this discourse must have another point of departure, must consider other themes, must come to distinctive conclusions by a different method. This is the hypothesis" (Dussel, 1980/1985, pp. 172–173).

Coloniality of power

Frantz Fanon (2004/1961, 1967) and Aimé Césaire (1955/1970) have been among the most important authors to denounce the impact of colonialism on knowledge in the last part of the twentieth century. They and Enrique Dussel (1980/1985, 1990, 2007, 2009, etc.) have formed the basis on which Latin American thinkers have demonstrated that not only does Latin America produce *café* or bananas, but that it is also a land that produces philosophy and knowledge. Anibal Quijano (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b) is the author who founded the concept of coloniality of power as a category that made visible the qualitative and epistemological effects of colonialism today: "*incluso una vez acabado el status formal de colonia, la colonialidad no terminó, ha persistido en las jerarquías sociales y culturales* [although the formal status of colony finished, coloniality has not finished, it has persisted in the social hierarchies]" (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, p. 584, my translation). Quijano also explained that *"la colonialidad del poder implica, en las relaciones internacionales de poder y en las relaciones internas dentro de los países, lo que en América Latina ha sido*

denominada como dependencia histórico-estructural [the coloniality of power implies, within the international relationships of power and within the interrelationship among countries, what in Latin America has been called the historic-structural dependency]" (2000, p. 376, my translation).

Quijano, Dussel, and Mignolo, among others, created the coloniality/modernity intellectual group that developed many categories that shape a Latin American theoretical perspective. If the West understood colonialism as a nineteenth-century issue that entailed the idea of a Western country directly invading an African, Latin American, or Asian country, Quijano's notion of coloniality of power addresses how even five centuries later the Western invasion is still alive, but in epistemological and qualitative terms: Latin America only has Western categories to study its reality. In this way the framework of coloniality of power (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b) has emerged. As a theoretical perspective, coloniality of power has a predecessor: postcolonial studies.

Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonialism has been an intellectual effort relevant to the process of the epistemological independence of the colonized peoples of the world. I will not talk in depth about the significant exponents of postcolonialism as most of them are well known. It is more important to stress the differences between the postcolonialism tradition and the coloniality of power perspective given that there is an engaging conceptual discussion between these corpora of knowledge.

Edward Said's pupil, Timothy Brennan (2008), believes postcolonial theory was developed in the first part of the twentieth century by intellectuals in Latin America as well as China, India, Algeria, Vietnam, and Central America. In other words, postcolonial theorists were influenced by Jawaharlal Nehru, Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Frantz Fanon, and Patrice Lumumba (Brennan, 2008). Even though these anti-imperialist authors may be the predecessors of postcolonialism, Brennan thinks poststructuralism had the most important intellectual influence on postcolonial studies in the late 1970s. Many scholars address the origins of this theoretical tradition, such as in the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1977 and later works by Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, and others. (Some scholars trace the origin of postcolonial studies before Said's *Orientalism* in Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, or Kwame Nkrumah.) According to Brennan, Said's pupil, these later elaborations used poststructuralist literary theories such as deconstructionism, Lacanian psychoanalysis, discourse analysis, and post-Marxism. Brennan (2008) also emphasized that his professor, Said, drew particularly from research about the social democratic tradition of activists or historians. Brennan asserts that "postcolonial studies, then, is far from a unified ideological field, and there are several important fissures within it" (p. 45).

Brennan (2008) stressed how postcolonialism emphasizes its studies in the post-independence status of sovereign states; in other words, independence movements or military occupations are no longer the issue, but rather Eurocentric frameworks in the colonies. This is why the prefix *post* denotes an epistemological goal and an epistemological perspective. Using a mainly qualitative analysis of epistemological

othering and colonial subjectivity, postcolonial studies direct their critiques at Eurocentrism with the end of achieving the emancipation of colonized peoples. Postcolonialism starts from the idea of deconstruction (Derrida, 1997/1967) to dismantle the notion of Europe as the center of the creation of knowledge and to show how the West has tendentiously ignored and oppressed the majority peoples of the world. This aspect is especially problematic for many decolonial studies (Grosfoguel, 2008; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b; Dussel, 2007, 2009) that address how colonialism currently affects Latin America. In this case, colonialism is the issue for Latin American countries because countries such as México to Argentina are still not independent nations.

In particular, postcolonial studies seek to prove how the West has used knowledge against colonized peoples in the service of the colonizers' interests. Therefore, the value of the European sphere itself is to be questioned by subaltern people. This intellectual movement entails the epistemological challenge of enabling subaltern individuals to speak for themselves, but Spivak (1988) pointed out the paradox of this: if the subaltern speak, they are no longer subaltern. This ontological debate about being subaltern or not is important in this equation. Spivak made this argument using Derrida's deconstructionism because she is an expert on this theoretical corpus. In doing so, Spivak linked postcolonialism with postmodernism for many other scholars.

Notions of Coloniality

These kinds of reflections inspire a consideration of the differences between postcolonialism and coloniality because both seem to have similar aims. Nevertheless, there are some important features that theories of postcolonialism and coloniality do not

share. The most significant work on the distinctions between these two theoretical strands comes from Mignolo (2001) and Grosfoguel (2008).

Ramon Grosfoguel (2008) critiqued the underlying Eurocentric poststructuralist/postmodernist framework in postcolonialism because the works of Foucault, Derrida, etc., form the theoretical basis of its arguments. In other words, postcolonial theory uses the same Western tradition of thought in order to critique the West. Grosfoguel (2008) established the extent to which decolonial work is different from postcolonialism: Whereas the latter is a postmodern Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism, the first represents a critique of Eurocentrism from subaltern and silenced knowledges (Mignolo, 2000). This criticism focuses particularly on how the South Asian Subaltern Studies Group constrained the analysis of colonial India by privileging Foucault and other scholars.

As a theoretical effort, coloniality of power (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b) has helped to problematize the idea in Latin America that the only possible knowledge comes from the Western canon. Nevertheless, there are some implications of the coloniality framework that can be risky. One of the most relevant contributions of this perspective is the emphasis on the distinction between colonialism and coloniality in epistemological terms made by Anibal Quijano (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b). For him colonialism has to do with the economic, social, historical, and legal processes by which Europe invaded and appropriated America, whereas coloniality is a current cultural and symbolic structure that involves the supremacy of Western categories and framework to understand the

world. In this sense, it is necessary to view capitalism as European social wealth, which was built as a consequence of a colonial order that started with the fifteenth-century invasion of America by the Spanish, English, and Portuguese empires. While this contribution is relevant in epistemological terms, it could be risky in material terms, because this distinction implies that colonialism (the material appropriation of bodies and lands from oppressed peoples) does not exist anymore or that it is less important than the epistemological aspect of this process.

Quijano and Wallerstein (1992a and 1992b) described how slavery and genocide in America have been not only components of colonialism but also, from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, constitutive elements of what we know as capitalism today. Mignolo (2000) also emphasized that colonialism in turn was the constitutive element of current capitalism. In other words, colonialism appeared before capitalism, and colonialism gave birth to capitalism. Quijano and Wallerstein (1992a and 1992b) explained that the current version of the capitalist economy could not have existed without the colonial process (e.g., slavery and Indigenous genocide) in the American continent; therefore, the American colonies were not incorporated into a pre-existing capitalist system, but rather, the colonies were a constituent part of capitalism. From my point of view, the problem with this argument is that it constrains the discussion of colonialism as a constitutive force of capitalism by focusing on only these aspects: (a) Europe, (b) the time period from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, and (c) an epistemological analysis and only future projections for an epistemological agenda. In other words, this perspective does not stress these factors: (a) imperial globality (Escobar,

2004), (b) the time period of the current twenty-first century, and (c) the current material aspect of colonialism. Although coloniality of power is an engaging epistemological perspective, it can obscure the material current process of colonialism-capitalism.

Some scholars of coloniality have revised their original works (Dussel, Moraña & Jáuregui, 2008). For their part, Mignolo and Tlostanova (2008) described coloniality as a matrix of power that involves economics, the destruction of original forms of authority, sexuality, knowledge, and subjectivity to impose other foreign criteria that accord with European supremacy around the world. The four elements (economics, forms of authority, sexuality, etc.) of the colonial matrix of power are interdependent, but according to Mignolo and Tlostanova, racism is what unifies them. Four decades ago, Fanon had already explained the extent to which racism is central to understanding colonialism: "In the colonies, the economic substructure is also a superstructure. The cause is the consequence; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich" (1967, p. 40). Fanon elaborated:

> It is neither the act of owning factors, nor estates, nor a bank balance which distinguishes the governing classes. The governing race is first and foremost those who come from elsewhere, those who are unlike the original inhabitants, "the others." (1967, p. 40)

Nevertheless, Mignolo insisted on emphasizing the mainly epistemological dimension of colonialism: "Colonialism ended with independence (in Latin America, Asia, or Africa), but not coloniality" (2001, p. 435).

Santiago Castro-Gómez and Ramon Grosfoguel with their *giro de-colonial* (2007), Nelson Madonado-Torres with his coloniality of being (2007), and Anibal Quijano (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b) as the founder of the coloniality perspective have all strongly emphasized the epistemological and qualitative effects of coloniality. For Santiago Castro-Gómez (2007) modernity is not only a trend of thought but also a horizon that creates whole coordinates of thought by which the subject is created. For her part, Sivia Rivera Cusicanqui (2010) has been one of the most important critics of the coloniality of power perspective, especially because she has argued that Quijano's concept is not linked with the Latin American peoples' struggles, among other critiques. To highlight the importance of the absence of the current and material sense of colonialism within the coloniality perspective, it is helpful to echo some reflections on postcolonialism from Brennan (2008), the pupil of Edward Said. Brennan stated how postcolonialism focuses its studies on the post-independence status of sovereign states; in other words, independence movements and military occupations are no longer the issue, but rather Eurocentric frameworks imposed on the colonies. This is why the prefix *post* denotes an epistemological goal and perspective.

On the other hand, another important concept that will be useful in discussing the findings is De Lissovoy's concept of *violation* (2012a, 2012b). This concept makes visible a specific logic underlying capitalism: violation. As De Lissovoy (2012b) stressed, Marxism poses the moment of domination upon the surplus value created by the exploitation of the labor force. This process creates capital, which in turn creates capitalism as a major structure that becomes reified to humanity. It is important to note

that domination not only appears in the process described by Marx, but also in another space that Marxism did not anticipate: the space and instance of violation. This notion questions understanding power in terms of accumulation of privilege and proposes integrity as a way to face ubiquitous power. In this manner violation "seeks its surplus and satisfaction in the injury to the very identities it is complicit in producing" (De Lissovoy, 2012b, p. 468). In this process, "the trauma itself of its release a kind of surplus to the simple content" (2012b, p. 465) where "the injury is made ordinary, systematic and structural," and "the twisted monopoly of pleasure of sanctioned intimidation" (2012b, p. 469) is the means and end. As a result, "violation gives us a broken self to operate in a broken world" (2012b p. 466), and this has consequences for the self, society, economy, education, race, gender, etc.

De Lissovoy stated that "the logic of violation extends beyond the mere principles of racial or class hegemony" (2012a, p. 13). Violation is the logic of subjection that gathers the ingredients of power. Furthermore, in daily activities in education one can recall many examples in which a person could not resist the pleasure of injuring another person, at that moment both incorporating and expelling him/her. Neither incorporation nor expulsion occur in isolation or are simply structural. This concept illustrates qualitative and material aspects of life in capitalism, which is necessary for a new kind of education.

Urrieta has also furthered the study of decolonial education; for instance, he has problematized how the effect of colonialist processes on Indigenous peoples greatly

influences identity: “The reality is that identities are painful, contradictory, emotional, re/colonizing, endlessly searching in seas of everything and nothingness simultaneously” (2003, p. 148). As Urrieta described (2003), the “struggle for a ‘Self’” is one filled with emotions involving contradiction, pain, re/colonization, internalized oppression, and an endless search to remedy the physical and psychological atrocities committed against indigenous people (p. 148).

Urrieta (2009) has also pointed out a whitestream social construction that creates a certain kind of education that reinforces white supremacy. Some schools develop community identity discourses (language, artifacts, histories, and testimonies that re/create and sustain identity) that in turn reproduce the legitimacy of white supremacy (Urrieta, 2006). The colonial context of whitestream education obscures Latino students’ *testimonios* that make visible the pain and the struggle behind being “successful” (Urrieta, Kolano, & Jo, 2015). *Testimonios* describe realities of education that Western epistemologies have not taken into account.

Urrieta and Martínez (2011) proposed postcolonial methods of teaching. They conducted transnational ethnographic research on the translational patron saint’s fiesta celebrated by family members and children in San Miguel Nocutzepo in the Mexican state of Michoacán and in Los Angeles in the United States. To explain the educational implications of how the fiesta’s participants create a complex process of education through different “ways of knowing and ways of being” (2011, p. 256), the researchers have proposed the category of diasporic community knowledge (2011). Researching these kinds of non-Western educational practices represents an effective way to

deconstruct colonialism in education.

Other projects in Latin America are related to the Venezuelan project. One such project is the rescue of Afrocentrism and a recognition of the Afro-identity of Latin America. Before the collapse of the Soviet bloc, Afrodescendant peoples were not represented in the single national identity discourse of Latin American nations. At the beginning of the 1990s, the coloniality of power perspective pointed out the need to address the difference between colonialism and coloniality. The debate on the legacy of centuries of colonialism made possible the visibility of Afro-Latin American intellectuality and identity. Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks* and Aimé Césaire's *Discours sur le colonialisme* were finally admitted as intellectual works. In addition to this, in countries such as Honduras, Colombia, and Ecuador, Afrodescendants' political activism challenged the mestizo prototypical-national angle, pointing out that this kind of single natural culture was part of "ideological biologies of national identities" (Rahier, 2012, p. 1).

It is important to note that Afrodescendants' struggles have overlapped with Indigenous struggles. The fact that Afrodescendants' struggles have approximated as much as possible their situation to what is taken to be the case of Indigenous peoples has been key (Cárdenas, 2012; Raheir, 2012). On the other hand, in countries such as Ecuador and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, there have been significant debates about Afro and Indigenous life visions and their significance to national social identities. It is possible to say that the Afro-Ecuadorian social movement has involved empowerment and co-optation over the course of two time periods. The first phase from the 1990s to

2006 saw the creation of this movement in the context of neoliberal multiculturalism, and the second one started in the Rafael Correa leftist government in which many Afro-Ecuadorian activists and intellectuals occupy influential positions in the state's apparatus (de la Torre & Sánchez, 2012). In terms of theory, the first period was about the national neoliberal agenda taking into account the Afrodescendant population, whereas the second phase has meant co-opting certain black activists. However, the debate is that it is not enough to incorporate black populations, but rather to recognize intellectually and politically the black identity of Ecuador, or as Rivera Cusicanqui explained, to dismantle the widespread colonial landscape and rethink the white-mestizo-indigenous equation (as cited in Walsh, 2009).

In terms of Latin America's social debt to its Afro-identity, Walsh (2012) problematized how neoliberalism has created educational models that have co-opted Afro-epistemologies. For instance, the Bolivarian and Ecuadorian states have been forced to incorporate Afro and Indigenous life or cosmosvisions to make up for how modernity has meant the hegemony of a certain rationality that undermines the principles, visions, and knowledge of Afrodescendant peoples (Walsh, 2011). Juan García Salazar, the leader of the black communities movement in Ecuador, noted, "Our tradition [the Afro-Latino American one] teaches that these territories fed our enslaved bodies and planted in our hearts the real significance of freedom" (as cited in Walsh, 2011, p. 2). In the Afro-Colombian context, Afrodescendants' concept of humanity is known as *muntú*: "It is the conception of humanity that the most exploited peoples in the world, the Africans, give

back to the European colonizers without bitterness or resentment" (Zapata Olivella as cited in Walsh, 2011, p. 56).

Walsh & Santacruz (2007) described how Afrodescendant peoples who live between Ecuador and Colombia have realized that they lost control of their schools because the state took them over and did not want to incorporate and recognize that Afrodescendants were part of the national identity. As a response to this, these peoples have created ethnoeducative practices and contents, which aim to base education on their ancestral African ways of knowing.

Coloniality theory is important to this study in the sense that it provides a theoretical lens through which to examine Bolivarian education and critical pedagogy. In this project I am to study the extent to which Bolivarian education produces or reproduces colonial thought as well as analyzing the implications of the coloniality of power perspective and philosophy of liberation in critical pedagogy. This analysis is important because the Bolivarian project claims to be an alternative to the colonial empires that have exploited Latin America. What if Bolivarian education in its philosophical basis does not do that? To respond to these kinds of questions, it is useful to refer to Latin American frameworks, especially because as a Latin American individual and teacher I want to show in this project the way in which coloniality and philosophy of liberation as Latin American perspectives can enrich critical pedagogy. Both perspectives will help analyze whether critical pedagogy problematizes capitalism not only as an oppressive order in the world but also as the colonial social order that was constructed on the material and epistemological exploitation of the colonies within global

capitalism.

Further Scholarship on Education and Decolonization

It is important to recognize that even the North American tradition of critical pedagogy has helped open up discussions about cultural difference and cultural domination. As a Latin American teacher and researcher I think I can contribute to critical pedagogy in explaining the impact that theories of coloniality and philosophy of liberation can have in critical pedagogy. For his part, McLaren (1989, 2000; McLaren & Sleeter, 1995) has continued to provide creative intellectual tools to defend critical pedagogy from orthodox Marxist perspectives and postmodernism. He has proposed resistance multiculturalism (McLaren & Sleeter, 1995) and a pedagogy of revolution to challenge the neoliberal and globalized empire (2000, 2005; McLaren & Jaramillo, 2007). Giroux (1983, 1990; Giroux & Purple, 1983; Giroux & McLaren, 1989) has also elaborated on, among other issues, the foundations of core critical pedagogy and illustrated how teachers are intellectuals and how media is a pedagogical opportunity. Critical pedagogy has tackled the theoretical challenge that multiculturalism has posed to education (Steinberg, 2001; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1997) and the epistemological implications of how critical education is constructed (Kincheloe, 2004, 2008).

Going beyond the emphasis on multiculturalism, other scholars have more explicitly connected issues of epistemology to the problematic effects of colonialism. In her *Methodology of the Oppressed* (2000), Chela Sandoval talked about “Third World Feminism" as an epistemological standpoint for feminists of color in the United States,

for subjugated people under colonial rule or slavery, etc. Although Sandoval's field is not in education, her work has been influential in this field and has useful implications for education. For the postmodern world, she proposed a method of oppositional consciousness: the "methodology of the oppressed," which is "a set of processes, procedures, and technologies for decolonizing the imagination" (2000, p. 69). An important step in this effort to decolonize imagination is meta-ideologizing, which consists of "creating new, 'higher' levels of signification built onto the older, dominant forms of ideology in a radical process" (2000, p. 110). This aspect has to do with perception, consciousness, identity, an ethical ideological code in accordance with "egalitarian redistributions of power across such differences coded as race, gender, sex, nation, culture, or class distinctions" (2000, p. 111). Hence, the goal is that these qualitative intersections of symbolic power act together against dominant ideology.

In education it is necessary to apply a methodology of the oppressed and create educational practices to decolonize the imagination. Within schools, the students' imagination remains in the classroom's silence because the students' imagination does not match with the dominant ideology. De Lissovoy writes that "in contrast to the postcolonial, the decolonial emphasizes the ongoing process of resistance to colonialism while also connoting a wider field of application—one which extends from material projects that challenge the hegemony of capital to philosophical projects aimed at reconstructing fundamental understandings of ethics and ontology" (2010b, p. 285).

In addition, there is scholarship on education that addresses the need for teachers to think about the extent to which they do not want to problematize their identities, their

privileges, and their hegemonic stories and frameworks (Kumashiro, 2001), which reinforces hegemonic normalcy. After all, "to read critically is not merely to read texts that say critical things" (Kumashiro, 2001, p. 8) but also to read ourselves critically. This scholarship tries to challenge Western epistemological hegemony, which has led to a kind of "academic apartheid'' (Padilla & Chávez, 1995) or an "apartheid of knowledge'' (Delgado Bernal, 2002). As the West has established an epistemological ethnocentrism in education, the challenge is to avoid the risk of using any culture or epistemology "as a foil for the other" (McCarthy, 1998, p. 156) because sometimes the inclusion of differences in education "can serve less to describe who a group is, and more to prescribe who a group ought to be" (Kumashiro, 2001, p. 5).

Critical race theory and LatCrit theory have provided significant epistemological tools to decolonize education. These valuable theoretical perspectives are based in the following theoretical principles that problematize the Western-dominant framework of education: (a) the intersectionality of race and racism with gender, class, and sexuality; (b) the challenge to dominant ideology; (c) the commitment to social justice; (d) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and (e) the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches (Yosso & Solórzano, 2001; Yosso, 2002). These theoretical principles help construct an alternative study of education that analyzes and challenges "…the stories of those in power and whose story is a natural part of the dominant discourse—the majoritarian story" (Delgado as cited in Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 327).

Such scholarship constructs coloring epistemologies (Scheurich & Young, 1997) or endarkened epistemologies (Hurtado, 2003) of education that deconstruct the binary,

Cartesian distinctions of the mind, suffering, and spirituality. As Hurtado (2003) argued, traditional methods alone cannot explain or describe the multiple realities of people, especially oppressed populations. Hurtado problematized "…what we consider 'data' to considering spirituality as an integral part of the educational process" (2003, p. 222). Thus, Hurtado proposed "disruption as method" (2003, p. 223) as a way of constructing epistemological agency.

This scholarship and the Latin American effort to decolonize education both advocate the need to dismantle the hegemony of the Western canon. What can be considered "academic apartheid'' (Padilla & Chávez, 1995) is what Dussel (1980/1985) called the Western totality. Whereas Sandoval (2000) urged a decolonizing of the imagination, Quijano (2000a & 2000b) emphasized the extent to which Latin American countries are still living the epistemological effects of the colonial invasion. Other scholarship on decolonial education in Latin America has cited the suffering of the people as the fundamental ontological fact that sustains their efforts. Latin American scholars (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010) are among many others who seek a philosophical basis for decolonizing education and for giving a voice to their own silenced philosophies, which have not been heard because of their position as colonies of other empires. In this sense Latin American theoretical work (coloniality of power, philosophy of liberation and the Bolivarian education) towards the decolonization of education is not more special than that of the rest of the colonies of the world. It is just that it is necessary to listen to the silenced philosophical voices from this part of the world from their own individuals.

The Philosophy of Liberation: Enrique Dussel's Contribution to the Construction of Philosophy from the "Third World"

The Background of Enrique Dussel

Enrique Domingo Dussel Ambrosin is the Latin American founder of the philosophy of liberation, a philosophy of the oppressed in not only Latin America but also the rest of the colonized world. To summarize Dussel's philosophical contribution to the hegemonic philosophy, it is necessary to talk about his career in the context of intellectuality in Latin America, where he formed his ideas, and about some of his most influential works.

Enrique Dussel has made an impressive contribution to such fields of knowledge as philosophy, ethics, history, and politics. His works that present the basis of the philosophy of liberation are those that will be mainly taken into account by this research, because the goal is to problematize the education system of the Bolivarian education in light of a philosophy from the periphery, from individuals who have constructed their philosophical thinking in living in colonized territories.

Enrique Dussel fights an intellectual battle against Eurocentrism as the ethnocentrism that constructed modernity. To do so, Dussel deconstructs the philosophy, history, ethics, and politics that Eurocentrism created to build its ethnocentrism. This process is the creation of the philosophy of liberation. This is key because this research is trying to determine whether the Bolivarian education entails a breakdown in relation to the majority's narrative of critical pedagogy. Dussel's philosophy of liberation is the

philosophical means by which to analyze the extent to which the education for the socialism of the twenty-first century challenges the ethnocentrism of critical pedagogy.

As Dussel (1980/1985) pointed out, a colonial philosophy was exported to Latin America and many other oppressed regions of the world during the sixteenth century, given the fact that some of the most important universities in Latin America were founded after 1552.

The colonial philosophy cultivated throughout America silenced the philosophies of India, China, the Arab World, and of course, Latin America. Dussel (1980/1985) explains how Antonio Rubio (1548–1615), who wrote *Logica mexicana,* and the Peruvian writer Juan de Espinoza Medrano (1632–1688) and his *Cursus Philosophicus* in 1688 created Latin American philosophy but those works were still embedded in the colonial philosophical canon.

Philosophy of Liberation's Hypothesis

The philosophy of liberation is a philosophy that does not intend to be the result or reproduction of the colonial philosophical norm, primarily because it comes from outside of the norm as an original effort to construct philosophical categories from the periphery from individuals who have created their philosophical thinking in living in that periphery.

Dussel clearly explains the hypothesis of the philosophy of liberation:

> The hypothesis is as follows: It appears possible to philosophize in the periphery in underdeveloped and dependent nations, in dominated and colonial cultures, in a peripheral social formation only if the discourse of the philosophy of the center is

> not imitated, only if another discourse is discovered. To be different, this discourse must have another point of departure, must consider other themes, must come to distinctive conclusions by a different method. This is the hypothesis. (1980/1985, pp. 172–173)

The hypothesis of the philosophy of liberation will be contrasted with the philosophical basis of the Bolivarian education in order to identify if this new kind of education entails a different kind of philosophy too. In other words, if the Bolivarian education as an attempt to construct an education for the socialism of the twenty-first century aims to represent the oppressed, it has to have as its philosophical basis a philosophy of the colonized and oppressed. For instance, this new kind of education has to come from underdeveloped, dependent, dominated or colonial nations and their individuals (i.e., the periphery), and should not imitate the philosophy of the center. It has to discover an original discourse, which in turn should be based on another point of departure, should explore other themes, and make different conclusions by different methods.

The hypothesis of the philosophy of liberation is based in the concepts of *totality* and *exteriority* among other related concepts in order to build categories from those peoples who were considered incapable of constructing philosophy. As Dussel explains: "What is unique in a historical description of philosophy of liberation is the use of categories such as center/periphery, oppressing classes/popular classes" (Dussel, 1980/1985, p. 173). The goal is creating conceptual tools to describe what the dominant philosophy has not wanted to see.

Important Conceptual Categories of Dussel

Totality

According to Dussel (1980/1985), totality is the certitude with which the world dominators live and think of themselves and others, but these others are on the periphery and not a part of the dominators' center, or totality. For instance, the empires of the world possess an ontology that justifies the ideology that confirms their certitude of the others as others. In his *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* of 1552, Bartolomé de las Casas produces an intense alter-narrative in which he describes how the new periphery of the world (from the Caribbean to México) undergoes the process of becoming Europe as the center. Starting with Columbus's voyage in 1492, Spain committed genocide in *La Española* (today Haiti and the Dominican Republic). The Indigenous populations of the island were murdered in the search for gold. As a result of the Spanish empire failing to find gold on the island and of the English empire earning a lot of money selling slaves, the businesses of sugar and slavery started a new era in *La Española*. Ultimately, *la plantación* (the plantation) was the effect of how the totality manifested itself by crushing those who were not part of the totality: Indigenous peoples murdered in a genocide and Africans enslaved in America.

The Bolivarian education must problematize the role of totality in colonized oppressed areas. It has to portray how the center (Europe) created its own totality in order to disallow any other realities from existing; this is why totality constructs its name: the entire center matters insofar as only the center exists.

Dussel says, “Totality indicates the horizon of horizons” (1980/1985, p. 22). As a result, totality is the ontology that the center creates to validate its existence as *the existence*; it is a self-projection that does not accept that it is only a “self” and does not recognize the non-center as part of the totality. It is the institutionalization of a single version of the world as *the version* of the world. Dussel explains: “Inasmuch as the institutionalization may be dominating, the negation of the being of another person, the critique of the Totality is now an essential moment of Liberation Philosophy” (p. 6, 1996).

That means that the Bolivarian education should address a critique of the totality but from the perspective of the other, the colonized or dominated, those who have been neglected by the totality. In this sense, the Bolivarian education should be not only a different kind of education, but also an intellectual creation, a manifestation of a utopian project in the sense that it must come from “that-which-has-no-place” (Dussel, 1996, p. 7): the colonized and poor individuals, the women, the capitalist peripheral nations.

It will be interesting to see how Bolivarian education takes into account the way in which totality in the form of capital excludes and alienates the other (the oppressed peoples). For instance, perhaps some of the curricular documents explain how the peoples of the colonies are subsumed (alienated) in the salary system, as creators of surplus (Dussel, 1996, p. 13).

It is possible to see how totality is the horizon that only admits what maintains it as *the* horizon. For instance, there is a *machista* totality. Patriarchy is not only a social order imposed against non-male subjects; it is a whole totality that obscures something

else. At the first stage, there is not struggle, because a struggle exists where there are at least two entities fighting each other. Totality is born as a totality from the first instance. This is why it is called totality, because it does not allow anything else to exist. The power of totality is that there is not something else to look at it. It constitutes the only way as *the* only way. Patriarchy as totality is broken as a totality when it is challenged as the only horizon against which society could be constructed.

Dussel (1980/1985) also explains how education as totality manifests itself when students are only subjects of culture. In this respect, education is instrumental in regards to the status quo. Learning is not an intellectual task, but rather it is only a cog in the machine in society. Many companies dominate the test development market, making a profit at the expense of public education. These corporations try to conform education to a totality in which the absence of tests is considered insane; if such a notion is accepted as common sense, totality is created successfully for the dominant part of society. According to the philosophy of liberation's concept of totality, the education system of a new kind of socialism must tackle the neoliberal totality in education.

Exteriority

Another key concept of the philosophy of liberation is exteriority. Dussel offers a definition: "Exteriority . . . is meant to signify the ambit whence other persons, as free and not conditioned by one's own system and not as part of one's own world, reveal themselves" (1980/1985, p. 40). In this sense, exteriority is not only openness toward the other, because this stance conserves the hegemonic totality because the other is the outsider of the totality; exteriority is the moment before that. Dussel explains:

> *Con la propuesta que el Otro, los pobres, constituyen comunidades empíricas fuera del sistema, donde experimentan éticamente relaciones humanas que le son negadas en el sistema. Es desde esa utopia (ouk-topos: lo que no-tiene-lugar-en el sistema) desde donde la "razón ética" comienza su trabajo*. (1998, p. 69, my translation; In this proposal, the Other, the poor, constitute empiric communities outside of the system, where they experience human relationships in terms of ethics that the system neglects. It is from this utopia (ouk-topos: that which does not have any place within the system) where the "ethical reason" starts its work).

As Galeano (1971) describes, Latin American countries have only been the empiric others in the mainstream of history. More specifically, mothers, fathers, lovers, and children from this part of the "Third World" constitute the *ouk-topos* (the no place) where the philosophy of education can begin its work. To do this, it is necessary to open education to the exteriority from which it is contained; the philosophical *fronteras* (borders) of education can be enriched by listening to the suffering of the colonized "Third World"-- in this case, Latin America.

For instance, in 1973 there was a coup d'état against Salvador Allende, a president democratically elected by the people of Chile. His was a socialist government democratically voted for in transparent elections, but instead of allowing a non-aligned society to exist, the totality imposed the first neoliberal experiment in the continent (North, central and south America). The new de facto government ordered a hike in the price of bread from 11 to 40 escudos, a hefty overnight increase of 264% (Chossudovsky, 2003). This shock treatment for destroying this project of the people was an attempt to

control colonies in the context of the Cold War. In addition, disappearances occurred during the brutal military regime that governed between 1973 and 1985. In essence, Chile was not a country, Chile became only a colony to be re-captured; it was a punished colony.

The ruling totality never opened itself toward Chile because it was only a colony to be disciplined. Exteriority as a principle never happened because it was not necessary as Chile was only a territory to be recaptured; it was not a country where peoples existed with lives, hopes, stories, fathers, sons, daughters, etc. In this case, exteriority would have guided education only if it had opened the totality at its philosophical basis to the philosophy of the education that Allende and many people were trying to implement before September 11.

Chile led the first experiment in a massive project to privatize education in Latin America. There, education now had "First World" prices for parents with "Third World" salaries. Exteriority is a key concept in the philosophy of liberation because it matters for the peoples existing on the periphery. An alternative education system (such as the Bolivarian one) is supposed to take into account these stories from the exteriority to challenge the history of totality.

A new type of education must be aware that education should not start from the dominant rationality (like the privatization project in Chile since 1973), but from the exteriority of the colonized, exploited, excluded (women as sexual objects, individuals surviving living in the "Third World", ways of knowing of the colonized nations, etc.), from all who are non-beings within the system, since they are only considered as raw

materials. Exteriority entails negating the negation (negating the fact that the oppressed are only peoples to be plundered). In doing so, the peoples on the periphery are living in the affirmation of the exteriority of the Other from where the critics start (Dussel, 1996).

The Relationship between the Philosophy of Liberation and the Theology of Liberation

Another interesting theoretical implication of Dussel's work is the relationship between his philosophy of liberation and the theology of liberation. After 1968 there was an intense intellectual environment in which many interesting projects fed off each other and intellectual strands influenced the construction of Dussel's philosophy of liberation. Fals Borda, Camilo Torres, Paulo Freire, and Enrique Dussel, among others, discussed their findings on the construction of a sociology of liberation, a pedagogy of the oppressed, the theology of liberation, and the philosophy of liberation, among other initiatives.

Liberation theology is well known as the Catholic Church's option for the poor in theological and practical terms. It also includes interpretations of the Bible from the poor and from many theologians and priests in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Some of the most relevant notions are about Jesus's position in human history (Gutiérrez, 1975), the interpretation of Genesis as an opportunity to ask why only some people own the land when God gave the land of the earth to everyone, and the interpretation of Exodus as a clear manifestation of how God released the poor from slavery and oppression (Berryman, 2003). In particular, the theology of liberation condemns the structures of social sin, denouncing how existing social structures cause injustice (Berryman, 2003). Another key notion of liberation theology is that Latin America must choose liberation

over development (Gutiérrez, 1975). This means that Latin America's poverty is the effect and not the cause of the oppression of Latin American peoples; the cause is the role of this region's countries within the capitalist international dynamic.

This shows that there have existed convergences between important religious orders and those of liberation theology in relation to the construction of a theological and intellectual type. Tahar Chaouch (2007a) points out the fact that one of the most active religious orders has been the Company of Jesus. The Jesuits appear simultaneously like agents of Roman power and agents against power, who are critical of the institution.

In this way, the theology of liberation and Dussel's philosophy of liberation came from the same historical, political, and epistemological contexts in which the aforementioned scholars attempted to intellectually tackle questions about dependency and misery in Latin America. In this manner, both philosophical strands share intellectual tasks as both have constructed important categories with which to study the Latin American context.

Some of the most important liberation theology documents to describe relevant categories and concepts came out of the 1968 Conferencia General del Episcopal Latinoamericana in Medellin and the 1979 Conferencia General del Episcopal Latinoamericana in Puebla. According to Tahar Chaouch (2007a), it is possible to identify at least two strands within these documents: the developmentalist strand and the liberationist one that was supported by Gustavo Gutiérrez. The latter is one of the most important representatives of liberation theology.

It is important to mention that the grassroots communities of liberation theology

greatly influenced certain cases: the *Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional* (ELN) [National Liberation Army] in Colombia in 1966 (the case of the priest Camilo Torres is particularly noteworthy); the movement *Educación de Base* (MEB) [Education from the Bottom] created by Paulo Freire from 1962 to 1963; the Brazilian political party PT (Workers' Party) and the *Conferencia Nacional do Bispos do Brasil* (CNBB) [National Conference of Bishops] (Tahar Chaouch, 2007c); the resistance against the Salvadoran war during the 1980s, when Oscar Arnulfo Romero was a great inspiration and exponent (Oliveros Maqueo, 1991); and the Nicaraguan Revolution of 1979 (Berryman, 2003).

Likewise, liberation theologists had influence over the *Sacerdotes por el Tercer Mundo* [Priests for the Third World] in Argentina; the priestly group *Golconda* in Colombia; the movement *Oficina Nacional de Información Sacerdotal* (ONIS) [National Office of Priestly Information] in Peru in 1968; the *Cristianos por el Socialismo* [Christians for Socialism] in Chile in 1969; the *Movimiento Internacional de los Estudiantes Católicos-Juventud Estudiantil Católica Internacional* (MIEC-JECI) [Catholic Students' International Movement] in Montevideo, Uruguay, and Perú in 1972; and the *Conferencia Episcopal Latinoamericana (*CELAM) [Latin-American Bishop's Conference] and the *Instituto Pastoral Latino Americano* (IPLA) [Pastoral Institute for Latin America] (Tahar Chaouch, 2007b).

In the same vein, Jesuits created the *Centros de Investigación y Acción Social* (CIAS) [Centers of Action and Social Research] in the majority of Latin America's capital cities, and Ivan Illich created the *Centro Intercultural de Documentación* (CIDOC) in Cuernavaca, Mexico (Tahar Chaouch, 2007c). Samuel Ruiz and Indigenous

theology stand out in southeast Mexico during the second part of the twentieth century.

In intellectual terms, the philosophy of liberation and the theology of liberation are based on the notion that praxis is the foundation of the categorical map to understand Latin America. Gustavo Gutierrez defines theology as a reflection grounded on praxis. The scripture's meaning is a dialectical reflection on action; it is the practice in light of scripture (Levitan, 2011).

For his part, Enrique Dussel has explained the relationship between his philosophy of liberation and theology of liberation. Both share many aspects in common, and both theoretical strands draw primarily from dependency as the ontological problem to be solved in Latin America. As addressed by Gutiérrez (1975/1971, 1979), Ellacuria (1975), Dos Santos (1976), Cardoso and Faleto (1977), and Freire (1970), among others, the dependency of Latin America and its position on the periphery of the center (i.e., the wealthy countries of the world) make up an ontological situation that creates misery in Latin America. The poverty in these countries is not an isolated situation or a product of their corruption or underdevelopment, but rather is the result of the constant exploitation that they suffered as colonies of the center of the world since 1492-- that is, more than five centuries of looting up to the present.

Given that both strands draw from the same ontological ethos (dependency and misery), they also share the scope of liberation as the final destiny for the Latin American peoples: *La idea de liberation*. For instance, Gustavo Gutiérrez conceives three levels of liberation: (1) liberation from political oppression, (2) liberation of human consciousness, and (3) liberation from sin (Levitan, 2011). Likewise, Dussel (1980/1985) emphasizes

that the philosophy of liberation makes sense to the extent that it creates a philosophical discourse by which Latin American peoples can demonstrate that such a discourse exists first to achieve liberation from wealthy nations' oppression. In the same vein, Gutiérrez points out that capitalism has created an international social system of independent-wealthy nations and dependent countries (Levitan, 2011).

Dussel (as cited in Gómez, 2001) has asserted that the philosophy of liberation and theology of liberation both draw from this situation of dependency in Latin America to construct a theoretical response to it, but each use different methods. The sociology of liberation emerged from the theory of dependency, and the philosophy of liberation is a movement that runs parallel to the theology of liberation. Both share Gustavo Gutiérrez's idea that Latin America's situation has to be understood as "*una situación de pecado*" [a situation of sin] or as "*un rechazo al señor*" [a rejection of the Lord] (1975, p. 236).

Both theoretical perspectives share the idea that God and philosophy live in the poor. Therefore the locus of enunciation and creation is not a metaphysical one; it is the colonized and oppressed Latin American people (Indigenous, Afro-descendant, poor mestizos, women, children, etc). As Dussel explains:

> The pasch is the passage that is celebrated as a feast of joy-the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the feast of the liberation from Egypt; it is the feast of the Paschal Lamb before the deliverance, it is what people feel when they see they have been freed from slavery; it is redemption; it is salvation. Jesus redeems; it is like getting out of prison. (1978, p. 35)

It is interesting how much is shared by liberation theology and the philosophy of liberation. As the founder of the philosophy of liberation, Dussel has developed significant categories and concepts, as has been described in this study. His other publications should be better understood not precisely as a bibliography, but rather as a partial nomenclature of a whole intellectual project centered on the philosophy of liberation. Dussel has worked on the arquitectonic of the philosophy of liberation. This involves constructing a complex map of categories that make sense of the construction of the philosophy of liberation. Encountering the other in the context of the oppressed peoples of Latin America, Arabs, and non-European individuals, Dussel has problematized Western philosophy. The arrival and departure point for Dussel is the encounter with the other (particularly in relation to Levina's work). He draws from ethics (ethics understood as the encounter with the Latin American colonized and oppressed) in order to construct the philosophy of liberation as a whole philosophical project.

Other developments in Dussel's career included a fruitful dialogue with Karl-Otto Apel. The result of this intellectual work was Dussel's book *Ética de la Liberación en la edad de la globalización y de la exclusión* (1998). In the decade of 2000, he also began an in-depth research study on the politics of liberation.

Dussel has also developed an intense reflection on Latin America and the debate around modernity and postmodernity. He proposes transmodernity as a perspective that situates Latin America in an anti-postmodern project of the historical reconstruction of modernity. He problematizes the pretention to globality and the fundamental question about the way in which the economic and intellectual dependence of Latin America, the

periphery, is a constituent element of the richest countries' social wealth. As has been pointed out before, the theology of liberation emphasizes the association between the prosperity of certain nations and the oppression of the poor ones (Gutiérrez, 1975/1971).

In like manner, for Dussel, the oppressed peoples of the world, particularly in Latin America, have to overcome the richest countries' discussion about modernity and postmodernity, because there is neither a place for the poor's realities in that discussion nor a categorical map to see and read those realities.

Context and Critics of the Coloniality of Power

There have not been many critiques of the perspective of the coloniality of power. Nevertheless, one of the most significant critics has been Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, who is one of the most important intellectuals in Latin America. She was part of the *Katarista* movement in the 1970s, and today her work is about rescuing Indigenous knowledge from those who live and participate in the social movement in Bolivia. She is a professor at the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés in La Paz in Bolivia. In addition to her criticism of the analysis of the colonialty of power, she has also mainly criticized dominant academia:

> *El departamento de Estudios Culturales de Duke alberga en su seno a un emigrado argentino de los años 80, que pasó su juventud marxista en Francia y su madurez postcolonial y culturalista en los EE.UU. Al Dr. Mignolo se le dio en una época por alabarme, quizás poniendo en práctica un dicho del sur de Bolivia que dice "alábenlo al tonto que lo verán trabajar." Retomaba ideas mías sobre el colonialismo interno y sobre la epistemología de la historia oral, y las*

regurgitaba enredadas en un discurso de la alteridad profundamente despolitizado. (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2010, pp. 63–64, my translation; The department of cultural studies at Duke houses an Argentinian emigrant that spent his Marxist youth in France and his postcolonial maturity in the United States. Dr. Mignolo used to praise me at a time, perhaps putting into practice a saying from the south of Bolivia that says: "Praise the fool and you will see him working." He took up my ideas about internal colonialism and about the epistemology of oral history and he reshaped my ideas entangling and creating a discourse of otherness that is deeply depoliticized).

As the above quote shows, Rivera Cusicanqui claims Mignolo has taken up some of her ideas and reshaped them in a new fashion. Nevertheless, she acknowledges the Mexican intellectual Pablo González Casanova and his work on colonialism that appeared before Mignolo and Quijano:

Y este proceso se inició en los años 1970—el trabajo de Pablo González Casanovas, casi nunca citado . . . que se publicó en 1969—cuando Mignolo y Quijano estaban todavía militando en el marxismo positivista y en la visión lineal de la historia. (2010, p. 66, my translation; This process began in the 1970s—in the work of Pablo González Casanova, hardly ever cited . . . published in 1969—when Mignolo and Quijano were still militating in the positivist Marxism and in the lineal vision of history).

Rivera Cusicanqui points out the connections among private property, capitalism and the creation of knowledge. In this manner, she proposes using, instead of Mignolo's notion of a geopolitics of knowledge, the idea of a political economy of knowledge:

> *Por ello, en lugar de una geopolítica del conocimiento yo plantearía la tarea de realizar una "economía política" del conocimiento . . . porque es necesario salir de la esfera de las superestructuras y desmenuzar las estrategias económicas y los mecanismos materiales que operan detrás de los discursos*. (2010, p. 65, my translation; This is why instead of talking about a geopolitics of knowledge I would raise the issue of a "political economy" of knowledge . . . because it is necessary to get out of the sphere of superstructures and to crumble the economic strategies and materialistic mechanisms that operate under discourses).

This idea that there is a concrete political economy related to how knowledge is constructed is really useful for addressing how knowledge production is familiar with capitalist methods of producing and distributing concepts and frameworks around the world.

In this sense Dussel's philosophy of liberation is a philosophical corpus that integrates the material, epistemological, ontological, historical, concrete ways in which colonialism has operated in not only Latin America but also the entire world. It is important to point out that Dussel's philosophy of liberation draws from work on the theory of dependency that Gutiérrez (1975/1971), Ellacuria (1975), Dos Santos (1976), Cardoso and Faleto (1977), and Freire (1970), among others, used to address how the wealth of empires is directly connected to the periphery's misery. Dussel asserts that

Latin America's ontological situation of dependency and its position on the periphery is not the result of these countries' corruption or international bad luck, but rather the result of a calculated international division of labor, just as happened in the sixteenth century.

The significance of Dussel is that he has pointed out how the center has established itself in philosophy as the "totality [that] indicates the horizon of horizons" (1980/1985, p. 22). Before Dussel's work, the majority of philosophers said that Latin American peoples had perspectives, notions, and social movements, but no philosophy. After his work came out, Latin American peoples started thinking of themselves as creators of philosophy, and then academia also started viewing Indigenous, Afrodescendant, and oppressed peoples as creators of philosophy. Dussel pointed out that philosophy did not originate in Greece, but rather in Africa, Mesopotamia (now Iraq, Syria, Kuwait, and some parts of Turkey), China, and in areas around the world where Indigenous peoples have lived. Dussel stressed that philosophy has not taken into account the other 80% of the philosophy of the world. This is why Dussel's work is not a point of arrival but rather a necessary point of departure for examining how ethics, politics, and history from the suffering of the individuals and peoples who survive in the colonies.

It is necessary for this project to construct an alternative philosophical proposal for education in order to locate Latin America on the map of ideas, but at the same time, it is important to take into account some critiques of coloniality of power, such as those made by Rivera Cusicanqui. For instance, this project will take into account Rivera Cusicanqui's emphasis on how private property, capitalism, and the creation of knowledge are all linked. This implies addressing whether Bolivarian education

problematizes the geopolitics of knowledge in which certain regions of the world produce the epistemological canon.

CONCLUSION

For the purpose of this research, Dussel's philosophy of liberation and its basic categories of totality and exteriority (the moment of the encounter with the other), along with the aforementioned notions of coloniality, will be the concepts that will guide an analysis of the Bolivarian education. Quijano's theory of coloniality of power and these facets of Dussel's philosophy of liberation will be used to study selected documents. If coloniality of power (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b) helps to address the epistemological legacy of colonialism in critical pedagogy, among others aspects, philosophy of liberation (Dussel, 1985/1980, 1990, 2007, 2009, etc.). represents a foundational departure that has exposed how the mainstream canon of the philosophical basis of critical pedagogy can be enriched by the philosophy of the poor of the world as active creators of philosophy and not only as social movements in revolt. To what extent do the *Curriculum Nacional Bolivariano* or Bolívar's *Discurso de Angostura* break down the totality of the dominant perspective on critical pedagogy? Using Dussel's philosophy of liberation can help to respond to these kinds of questions, particularly because, as Zea (1957) has pointed out, Latin America has no place in the world mainly due to concepts constructed by the West, i.e., the set of categories according to which the world is interpreted. In contrast to the ideas that have been emphasized by the perspective of Western academia, constructing philosophical foundations for critical pedagogy from

the people who are struggling and surviving in the Latin American colonies is also the goal of this project.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This research study seeks to examine a silenced philosophy of education from Latin America, specifically from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. In pursuing philosophical research that challenges the Western canon of thought, it is important to use a non-Western methodology or at least to propose an alternative way to research the philosophy of education. To this end, this research will use as its methodology Dussel's proposal of analectics as a way to overcome Hegelian dialectics.

Research questions:

Main question: What is the philosophical basis of the Bolivarian education system?

Subquestions:

a) How can Dussel's philosophy of liberation help us to understand the cultural, political, and epistemological orientation of the Bolivarian education system?

b) What philosophical possibilities does the Bolivarian education system suggest for the philosophy of critical pedagogy?

To respond to these questions in this philosophical research, analectics will be used as a method to analyze specific documents in which philosophical notions of the Bolivarian education is discussed. The following sections detail this research study's methodology, the documents to be studied, and the criteria used to select them.

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

It is important to mention that the proposed process is not a linear one, given that there are currently many post-positivistic studies and postcolonial projects providing findings about various aspects of educational realities. All of the aforementioned streams of thinking are constantly in dialogue with each other to offer approaches of connecting methodologies to educational realities.

The fact that there is not a unique and linear perspective to approach educational realities has meant that the distinctions between micro–macro and subject–structure are only didactic because subjects and structures perform and construct their micro and macro realities in such complex ways. This makes educational research challenging for researchers, primarily when they accept that they are the primary tools for analysis and data construction.

This means that different methods and techniques of qualitative research demand that the researcher implement a holistic attitude. As qualitative research draws mainly from cultural anthropology, it involves interpretation as a perspective and as a direct approach to reality. For instance, ethnography has been used by anthropologists to try to understand "the Other" in their "natural contexts," i.e., they spent a lot of time (even years or decades) in fieldwork, writing extensive notes and lengthy descriptions and building a rapport and relationships with participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1994; Willis, 2007).

Case studies are also another way to approach reality and to explain the reasons for selecting specific phenomena, events, groups of people, etc. The key issue is deciding what to study, where to conduct the study, and who will participate in the research. Case

studies specifically aim to show why certain cases are worthwhile to research. Specifically, there are ethnographic case studies (ethnographic studies are usually case study projects), historical case studies, etc. (Willis, 2007).

Slightly different from the aforementioned methodologies, participatory qualitative research stresses the importance for the researcher of participant observation to get engaged with the community, but participatory action research draws from the category of praxis to propose connections among community, research, and an idea related to social justice—transformation of the researched contexts (Rojas, 2002).

It is important to mention that even though positivist and post-positivistic perspectives and methods of educational research are linked to conservative purposes, qualitative perspectives, methods, and techniques can also aim to serve conservative goals. As the postcolonial framework stresses, anthropology was born as a colonial intellectual tool to impose the West's economic oppression on the colonies. The notion of *ethno* implies the construction of "the Other" in opposition to the West (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Bogdan & Biklen, 2010). Western peoples are not *ethno*-peoples; hence, being categorized as an ethnos is already an insult to the intelligence of colonized peoples.

To emphasize the importance of interviews in qualitative research, the methods of the structured interview, life history or *testimonio*, and focus groups, among other factors, underscore the fact that when people express their ideas about their realities, they are also creating their own realities, as some discourse analysis' strands argue (Foucault, 1971/1987; Castro, 1996). In particular, the postmodern perspective enables educational research to attach importance to the "non-scientific" word, or the discourses of the

people. Foucault's conception of discourse has particularly influenced many studies. In *The Discourse on Language* (1971/1987), Foucault reveales how historical determinations create discursive formations that delineate the space of the sayable and constrain people's discourses. Foucault's legacy has been applied to what people say and write in a broader sense. A text can include movies, media, TV shows, etc., and in all of these cases, what people express is considered a text, i.e., a sociocultural construction that can be deconstructed. Furthermore, van Dijk (1999) founded critical discourse studies as a way to address discursive analysis from the perspective of Frankfurt's critical theory instead of from postmodernism. As he explains, critical discourse analysis is interested in studying who benefits and who is oppressed as a result of the control of the discourse because everybody does not have access to the discourse. Specifically focusing on education, some interesting studies have applied literary and textbook analysis to the underlying sociocultural knowledge presented in K–12 textbooks and educational standards (Brown & Brown, 2010; Brown, Brown, & Vasquez, 2012).

THE SPECIFIC METHODOLOGY OF THIS STUDY

Drawing from qualitative methodology's strand of discourse analyses, the methodology of this study focuses on the analysis of theoretical and curricular documents of Bolivarian education. In this sense, this research aims to study discourses that certain social actors have expressed through specific texts, in this case, theoretical and curricular documents.

This research tries to challenge the idea that the "Third World" creates folklore or "interesting practices" in terms of education, whereas the West creates serious philosophy. This is why a non-Western framework will be used to research a non-

dominant philosophy of education. The same applies to my methodology. If the postmodernist analysis of discourse is a European critique of its own modernity, and if van Dijk's critical discourse studies are still a methodological importation of the Frankfurt school, it is necessary to follow an alternate methodology for researching the discourses and texts from Latin America. To grasp the philosophical basis of Bolivarian educational documents, this study will use a specific method that integrates Dussel's analectics and Xirau's use of images (1968a, 1968b, 1971, 1995) and the search for what Xirau calls "the presence" (1993).

Analectics

Dussel (1985/1980) makes a crucial contribution to philosophy with his analectics method because it explains how every person or group in Latin America is always situated "beyond" (*ano*-) the horizon of totality (the European, modernist, and imperialist totality of the present). The analectical moment provides support for new unfoldings and opens us to the metaphysical sphere (which is not the ontic one of the factual sciences or the ontological one of negative dialectics), referring us to the Other. Its proper category is exteriority. The point of departure for its methodical discourse (a method that is more than scientific or dialectical) is the exteriority of the Other. Its principle is not that of identity but of separation and distinction (Dussel, 1985/1980, p. 158).

First, it is important to say that Enrique Dussel has spent much of his career pointing out how Eurocentrism is the dominant ethnocentric perspective upon which the myth of modernity has been constructed. In doing so, Dussel has rebuilt history, ethics, and politics. In the search for new categories, I did not want to use colonial methods to denounce colonial frameworks; I wanted to use new categories and epistemologies to

propose decolonial frameworks. Dussel's analectic method is relevant to this effort. As Dussel (1990) pointed out, Feuerbach, Marx, and Kierkegaard wrote criticisms of Hegelian dialectics. According to Dussel (1990), Levinas[14] is a key author in this theoretical discussion, because Levinas has emphasized the ethical dimension of the criticism of modernity, particularly in terms of the Other as the first tenet of philosophy. Nevertheless, Dussel indicates the extent to which criticism of Hegelian dialectics from Feuerbach, Marx, and Kierkegaard are still modernist critiques, and even Levinas' questions are still Eurocentric. Dussel emphasizes that both perspectives have not overcome the modernist, Eurocentric notion of dialectics and explains that according to both perspectives, Latin American, Indigenous, African-American (from North and South America), and Asian people are only objects or things. Dussel pointes out that Levinas does not think of the Other as an African migrant or an Asian person. This is why oppressed people cannot use frameworks that have previously underestimated them. In this manner, Dussel proposes constructing an *ana-logos*, or ana-lectic thinking, to exceed dia-lectics. He addresses how dialectics is the totality[15] in its self-reflection. Dialectics, as a Eurocentric method, goes from basis (Eurocentric notions) to entities (Eurocentric subjects) and from entities (Eurocentric subjects) to basis (Eurocentric notions), whereas ana-lectics emerges not from a place of *ego cogito* (I think), where oppressed peoples are objects, but rather from the periphery of the totality of Euro-ethnocentrism: Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, etc.

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[14] For some scholars, the ethics of Levinas is problematic in terms of the context of Palestine.

[15] Dussel is critiquing the Western notion of totality (Europe and wealthy countries as *the* totality), and he proposes an ana-totality (the oppressed peoples of the world, and not only Western peoples).

Dia-lectics is the totality built without colonized and oppressed peoples, but ana-lectics as the face of the Other is an *ana-logos* (i.e., alternative knowledge and an alternative vehicle of the creation of knowledge). In this respect, the channel of knowledge creation is the ana-character of this method; in other words, it is determined by ethics. For Dussel (1985/1980), recognizing Latin American, African, or Asian peoples as the ethical moment of knowledge creation is the root of the ana-lectic method; it arises from the revelation of the Other. The steps of this method consist of passing from the ontic perspective of the self to the ontologic study of the Other; it is the disruption of the episteme from the starting point of ethics. Dussel explains:

> The analectical moment of the dialectical method (ana-dialectical method) gives absolute priority to the *proyecto* of liberation of the other as new, as other, as distinct (and not only as different within the identity of the whole). In the final analysis, it can be affirmed that the analectic moment of dialectics is founded on the absolute anteriority of exteriority over totality, even to affirming the priority of the Absolute Other as creative origin over creation as a work, as a finite and therefore perfectible totality. (1985/1980, p. 192)

The need to overcome Hegelian dialectics is a philosophical need not only for the oppressed peoples of the world, but also for philosophy itself as field of knowledge. Philosophy has been incomplete because it has not taken into account 80% of the philosophical world.

In this project, analectics is proposed as a non-dominant methodology to study a non-dominant educational proposal: the Bolivarian education. The analectic method of

the Latin American philosopher Enrique Dussel (1985/1980) has led the philosophical direction of this research to open dialectics for the oppressed of Latin America.

Xirau's Use of Images and the Search for "the Presence" to Analyze Philosophy

As explained in the previous section, dialectics is an epistemological stance that does not take into account colonized peoples, whereas analectics is an *ana-logos*, alternative knowledge and an alternative vehicle for the creation of knowledge informed by the oppressed.

This *ana-logos* can be constructed using literature's epistemological tools to create alternative knowledge and cosmovisions. For instance, as Salgado pointes out (2001), the Hellenic effervescence emerged as resistance against scientific positivism in México. In doing this, many writers used Hellenic symbols to create an ana-view of what can be created as a reality for Latin America. In this way, not only does literature express an aesthetic reality, but literature also produces epistemologies that in fact build reality.

The epistemological tools of literature can be used to analyze philosophy and knowledge. In this manner, it is important to describe how philosophical concepts contained within Bolivarian educational documents will be studied and problematized in a concrete manner. As this study aims to use a philosophical method from Latin America to construct a philosophy of education, Xirau's methodology to seek and construct philosophy is ideal for this research.

Ramon Xirau is a Mexican philosopher, a member of the *Academia Mexicana de la Lengua* [Mexican Academy of the Language] and *El Colegio Nacional* [The National College], and a professor emeritus at the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* [National Autonomous University of México]: three of the most prestigious intellectual

organizations in México. Xirau (1968a, 1968b, 1971, 1975, 1995), a highly knowledgeable expert on European philosophy, has urged the kind of crisis that Western philosophy experiences at its epistemological basis. After analyzing certain European and Mexican philosophers and writers, he has constructed the category of "the presence" (1993) as a philosophical space that has not been addressed by the Cartesian distinction between body and soul and its Western notion of time.

Xirau has developed a comprehensive philosophical perspective that demonstrates how the contemporary Latin American written word is not only expression but also philosophy captured in forms that the Western canon does not validate (1975).

The methodology that Xirau uses to extract philosophy from Latin American writers or readings will be used to respond to the questions that this study addresses, because he has developed specific techniques to analyze Latin American philosophy.

Xirau (1971) describes how modernity's conception of science (natural or social) wants to be realistic and material, but its crisis is precisely the conception of what *natural* or *social* mean. In this sense, the West has reached the end of its time because the limit of what the West divided in the sixteenth century is not sufficient for even the West.

As Cabrera (2009) explains, Xirau emphasizes the fusion of images and arguments and the strength with which the written word can point out and manifest a *philosophical presence.* In this manner, for Xirau, images can be used as arguments in a philosophical discussion. Images are expressions of language, which use language to transcend its limitations. To put it in a simple terms, it could be said that images can be expressions, such as "It is a work of art," "It all fell out of the sky," or "The intellectual

arc of the academic universe is long, and it curves in time, cascading in variegated drifts from one methodological stance to another" (Kirkland, 2014, p. 181).

These linguistic expressions, when constructed within specific contexts, can address thoughts that are beyond Western reason. Images, according to Xirau, do not provide ways to name or express ideas, but rather *to evoke* thoughts. Therefore, images refer directly to objects instead of merely name them. As Xirau explains, "*las imágenes, más que espejos, son así ventanas* [images more than mirrors of thoughts are windows]" (1968b, p. 50). In this manner, Xirau's philosophical method is described as an approach not only to perform discourse analysis but also to analyze and create philosophy.

Ramon Xirau (1993) explains another key concept that is useful for analyzing Latin American philosophy: "the presence." Xirau discusses how Quevedo described how human beings are reduced to many successive presents, or many instants. For Xirau, the divisions of the past, present, and future impede the ability to see an alternative philosophical ethos-destiny: the presence. If time is reduced to fragmented instants, and if these instants are reduced to more fragmented instants, time is nothing; in other words, time disappears (Xirau, 1997). This is, in a concrete manner, the reality for Latin America. There are many isolated Latin American nations and peoples who have lived/suffered in the time of the West after 1492: a folkloric past, a constant present of colonialist invasion after invasion, and an inconstant future. Latin America can achieve the fullest presence out of the fragmented reality of colonialism.

For instance, following Columbus's first voyages, Spain invaded *La Española* (now the Dominic Republic and Haiti). The Spanish empire's primary focus was gold; the Indigenous inhabitants, the Taíno, were enslaved and forced to find gold for the

Spaniards. After the genocide of the Taíno and the failed search for gold, thousands of African slaves were transported to *La Española* to establish a new business: sugar cane. In the seventeenth century, Spain ceded half of *La Española* to France through Rijswijk's Trade. As a result, the Dominican Republic and Haiti were born as countries. The residents of one speak Spanish, the other French. As has been noted, this is an example of how Latin America lacks what Xirau referred to as "presence" (1993, 1997); it only has a remote past, a fragmented present of plundering, and an uncertain future.

Xirau presents the following example: presence is like a ship crossing the sea. For the people who are watching the ship from the shore, the ship is moving at a particular point in time, but if we are navigating inside the ship, the ship is continuity: it is presence (1993). For some world empires, Latin America is only a ship that they see moment after moment, but Latin American people are inside the ship; they are navigating, and they want to construct a whole presence as a great and united Latin American nation, as Miranda, Bolívar, Rodríguez, Chávez, and thousands of people dreamed. In explaining Xirau's category of presence, Bernárdez describes how the notion of presence denotes the idea of a river of fire that in changing, reposes (2007). In this way, Latin America is a river of fire that in changing, reposes and waits for its presence to cease to be a colony.

The methodology of this study consists of the integration of certain steps within an inductive process: searching images and written expressions that suggest the idea of "presence" within the theoretical and curricular documents of the Bolivarian education

In this manner, I will study how meanings and signs (Geertz, 1973) within the texts are deeply interconnected. This in turn will enable me to identity in the documents whether *presence* exists as an alternative ethos-destiny-origin that gives Latin America a

philosophical residence that empires have refused to grant. In this process, I will try to identify how Xirau's elements match the categories of totality and exteriority of Dussel's liberation philosophy, and to see how liberation philosophy helps us grasp the philosophical basis and understanding of the possibilities and limits of the Bolivarian education.

For instance, I could find images within the theoretical document of Bolívar's Jamaica Letter when he says, "*El velo se ha rasgado y hemos visto la luz y se nos quiere volver a las tinieblas* [The veil has been torn asunder. We have already seen the light, and it is not our desire to be thrust back into darkness]" (Vol. I, 1950, p. 160; translation by Bertrand). This image matches Dussel's (1985/1980) idea of how Latin America needs to break down the totality of the empires. In the same documents, Bolívar enunciates the "presence" of the colonized peoples of Latin America: "*Yo tomo esta esperanza por una predicción, si la justicia decide las contiendas de los hombres. El suceso coronará nuestros esfuerzos; porque el destino de América se ha fijado irrevocablemente: el lazo que la unía a España está cortado* [I take this hope as a prediction, if it is justice that determines man's contests. Success will crown our efforts, because the destiny of America has been irrevocably decided; the tie that bound her to Spain has been severed]" (Vol. I, 1950, p. 160; translation by Bertrand). In this case, Bolívar is opening colonized Latin America to the exteriority (Dussel, 1985/1980) of its "presence" as an entity that transcends its status as a large colony. By following these stages of analyzing the Xirau's image theory; the idea of "presence;" Dussel's categories of totality, exteriority, and liberation; the analectic method; and the framework of the philosophy of liberation and coloniality of power, it will possible to construct a methodological bridge to connect the

Bolívar, Rodríguez and curricular documents. Matching Xirau's contributions with the philosophy of liberation's categories of totality and exteriority constitutes a methodological bridge that connects the framework and data of this study. Incorporating a methodology to study texts from the Mexican philosopher Ramon Xirau and using these data with a second methodological step from another Mexican philosopher, Enrique Dussel, are part of the effort of what Paris and Winn (2014) call humanizing research and decolonizing qualitative inquiry because "the history of qualitative and ethnographic work [seeks], at worst, to pathologize, objectify, and name as deficient communities of color and other marginalized populations" (2014, p. xvi).

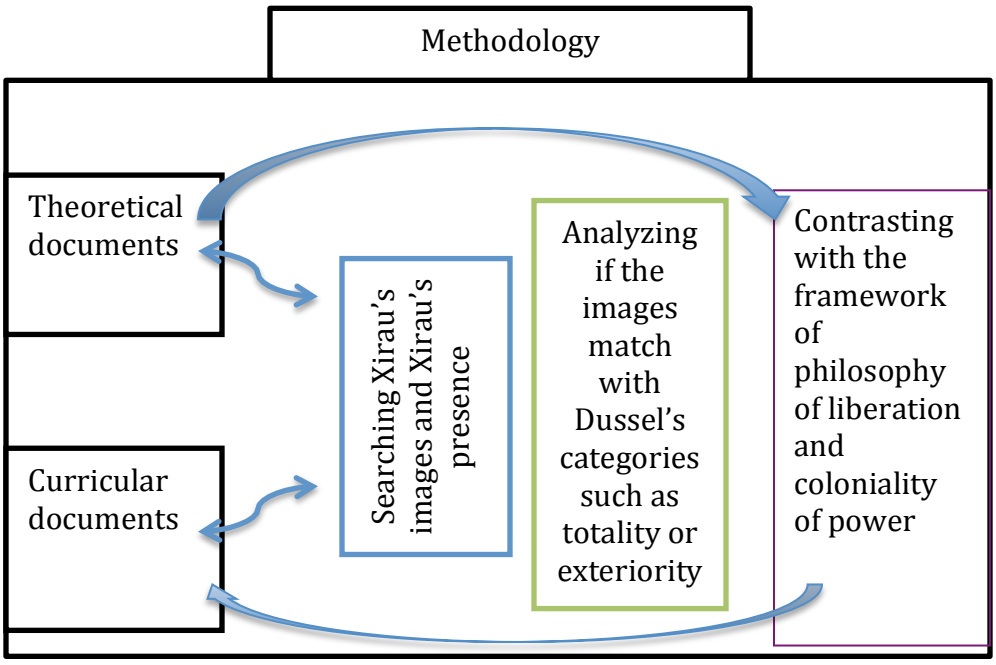

Figure 5. The analectical method: constructing an alter-logos

In this manner, the goal is constructing a non-dominant philosophy of education using categories created by those individuals who have lived in colonized or non-dominant nations.

The above methodological model will be applied to my study of certain theoretical and curricular documents that I will describe in the following section.

CRITERIA FOR DOCUMENTS TO BE ANALYZED IN ORDER TO GRASP THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF THE BOLIVARIAN EDUCATION

Now that the methodology of this study has been explained, it is now necessary to describe the documents that will be examined using these methodological steps. This section will examine the criteria and documents that will be studied in order to analyze the philosophical basis of Bolivarian education.

The rationale that guided the selection of the documents that I will analyze is explained in the following: theoretical texts and educative materials will be studied at length in this research because these documents manifest the official process of the Bolivarian Revolution by which Chávez shaped the field of education. In other words, the central criterion guiding my selection of texts is that they all either constitute or express the philosophical basis of Bolivarian education in its official version, which has explicitly expressed an aim to develop a non neoliberal education, socialism in the twenty-first century, other model of production (endogenous development) and other types of property (besides the private one). For instance, the Organic Law of Education of 1980 will not be studied because it portrays the educational system prior to the government of Chávez, and this document does not express the goal of constructing neither other model

of production nor non-neoliberal education. I have chosen this focus because the opposition to the government of Chávez has not proposed an education in support of any kind of non-neoliberal education or socialist one. On September 21, 2012, Henrique Capriles Radonski, the opposition candidate, released his educational national plan in which he promised to implement a non-political kind of education (Noticias24, 2012).

In regards to the theoretical documents, my analysis will be restricted to those texts by Bolívar and Rodríguez that contain their theoretical thoughts on education (Prieto Figueroa, 2006; Molins Pera, 1998; Ocampo López, 2007; Acosta Sanabria, 2010) and those that are explicitly considered the official philosophical basis of Bolivarian education (National Bolivarian Curriculum*,* 2007; Organic Educational Law of 2009).

In this sense, the notion of "theoretical sample" from Taylor and Bogdan (1998) is used to determine in what ways texts manifest official Bolivarian thought on education. Taylor and Bogdan explain that research does not have to be representative to be reliable. Representativeness as the positivistic goal of generalization is not the only criterion that gives validity to research. The notion of theoretical sample (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998) expresses the idea that data are relevant if they manifest the dense texture of social phenomena.

The documents to be studied, which are more than representatives of the general totality of the Bolivarian Revolution, are products of a complex social process that occurred in the field of education in Venezuela during the Chávez administration. These documents represent the official version of Bolivarian education for twenty-first-century socialism.

For instance, in 2007, after a national debate about education that included school's principals, teachers, and even students, Chávez's government released two official national documents, the National Bolivarian Curriculum and the National Bolivarian Curriculum for Elementary Schools. The new national constitution was approved and released on December 30, 1999. Article 102 established new changes for the educational system of Venezuela. Some of these changes, among others, include the duty of the state to provide education at all levels, the notion of education as a means of social transformation, and the necessity of incorporating a Latin American perspective into education.

After the approval of the new national constitution, a national consultation on education was developed and called the *Constituyente Educativa* [Educative Constituent] in a direct reference to the National Constituent Assembly at that time. The result of this Educative Constituent was the construction of the *Proyecto Educativo Nacional* [National Educative Project]. As Imen (2011a) pointes out, the fact that the National Organic Educative Law of Venezuela was approved in 2009, ten years after the Educative Constituent and a national debate about a new kind of education for Venezuela, demonstrates how the construction of what education means in Venezuela has been the result of an intense national discussion. In this social process, the National Bolivarian Curriculum and the Bolivarian Elementary School subsystem's Curriculum were released in 2007 and they represent important preliminary results of this intense debate in Venezuela. They are the products of a continuous process of confrontation, consultation, conflict, and agreement among Chávez's government and opponents.

Table 2 *The Documents Analyzed in This Research Project*

Theoretical Documents
Simón Bolívar's *Carta de Jamaica* [Jamaica Letter]
Simón Bolívar's *Discurso de Angostura* [Angostura Address]
Simón Rodríguez's *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* [Lights and Social Virtues]
Simón Rodríguez's *Sociedades Americanas* [American Societies]
Curricular Documents
Curriculum Nacional Bolivariano [National Bolivarian Curriculum]
Currículo del Subsistema de Educación Primaria Bolivariana [Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem's Curriculum]
Planificación Educativa en el Subsistema de Educación Básica del Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación del gobierno de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela [Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem from the Ministry of Popular Power for Popular Education of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela]
The sixth-grade textbook *Venezuela y su gente, Ciencias Sociales para sexto grado* [Venezuela and Its People, Social Sciences for Sixth Grade]

THEORETICAL DOCUMENTS

As has been explained in previous sections, the Organic Educational Law (2009) is the national law that regulates education in Venezuela. The theoretical basis of Bolivarian education as a mandatory foundation for all kinds of education derives from Article 14:

> *La educación regulada por esta Ley se fundamenta en la doctrina de nuestro Libertador Simón Bolívar, en la doctrina de Simón Rodríguez, en el humanismo social y está abierta a todas las corrientes del pensamiento. La didáctica está centrada en los procesos que tienen como eje la investigación, la creatividad y la innovación, lo cual permite adecuar las estrategias, los recursos y la organización del aula, a partir de la diversidad de intereses y necesidades de los*

y las estudiantes (Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación, 2009, translation mine; Education regulated by this law is based on the doctrine of our Liberator, Simón Bolívar, the doctrine of Simón Rodríguez, and social humanism, and is open to all schools of thought. Didactics is focused on learning processes guided by research, creativity, and innovation, which in turn allow the adaptation of classroom strategies, resources, and activities that draw from a variety of students' needs).

In addition, the 2007 *Curriculum Nacional Bolivariano* [National Bolivarian Curriculum] follows the guidelines established by the Organic Educational Act in the sense that it is mandatory to construct Venezuela's educational system from the doctrines and thought of Simón Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez. The National Bolivarian Curriculum explains:

> *Simón Bolívar constituye la mejor evidencia del éxito de la Educación Robinsoniana, con una visión sistémica de la realidad para impulsar su transformación social. Se puede apreciar en los diversos escritos y documentos del Libertador, que en sus reflexiones y análisis sobre Venezuela y la Gran Colombia, existía una estrecha y determinante relación entre la educación y la ciudadanía es decir, que sin instrucción o formación difícilmente podían los seres humanos convertirse en los ciudadanos y las ciudadanas que requería la fundación de la República. En el Discurso de Angostura (1819) cuando Bolívar habla de Moral y Luces y instrucción pública, está colocando importancia suprema en el impacto y los efectos transformadores de la educación popular. Esta*

> *posición le otorga una alta jerarquía a la educación de niños, niñas, jóvenes, indígenas, afrodescendientes, desposeídos y pobres, bajo la dirección y control directo del Gobierno, abriendo las puertas a las tesis del Estado Educador y de la educación como derecho social.* (National Bolivarian Curriculum ,2007, p. 10, translation mine; Simón Bolívar constitutes the best evidence of the Robinsonian education's success of having a systemic vision of reality in order to drive it toward its own transformation. It is possible to see in many of the Liberator's documents to what extent there was a huge connection between education and citizenship in his reflections about Venezuela and the Great Colombia. In other words, without that connection, the existence of those citizens, who are required by the foundations of a new republic, would not have been possible. In the Angostura Address (1819), when Bolívar talks about Morality and Lights and public instruction, he is emphasizing the huge importance of popular education. This fact gives great importance to the education of boys, girls, youth, indigenous peoples, African-descended peoples, and other poor people, under direct management and control of the State in order to create an Educator State and the creation of education as a social right).

The Organic Educational Act of Venezuela, the national law that enforces any kind of educational policy, and the National Bolivarian Curriculum specify how the thought of Simón Bolívar and his mentor and teacher, Simón Rodríguez, is the theoretical foundational framework on which the Bolivarian educational system has been built,

particularly during the government of Hugo Chávez.

This theoretical transformation has represented an enormous challenge because the Bolivarian government proposed transforming Venezuela's education system into a new Bolivarian one system drawing from Bolívar and Rodríguez as theoretical basis of a national transformation of education in opposition to the neoliberal educational perspective.

As I have already mentioned, this study will analyze Simón Bolívar's *Carta de Jamaica* (Jamaica Letter), *Discurso de Angostura* (Angostura Address), Simón Rodríguez's *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* (Lights and Social Virtues), and *Sociedades Americanas* (American Societies) as primary source documents In the following section, I will explain the documents in greater detail.

Simón Bolívar's *Carta de Jamaica*

Simón José Antonio de la Santísima Trinidad Bolívar y Palacios Ponte y Blanco historically known as Simón Bolívar or *El Libertador* (1783–1830) is one of the most important figures in the history of Latin America. He was the key leader in gaining independence from the Spanish empire for Venezuela, Colombia, Panamá, Ecuador, Perú, and Bolivia. Bolívar fought to unite all of the Latin American countries and release them from the colonialism that had caused their suffering since Columbus had arrived in Latin America.

Bolívar's historical, political, and philosophical legacy is tremendously significant to the history of the oppressed peoples of the continent. Many historical documents and archives associated with Bolívar manifest his ideas on numerous topics related to the independence of Latin American countries. Political speeches, such as *Discurso ante la*

Sociedad Patriótica (1811) and *Discurso de Bogotá* (1815), problematize Venezuelans' docility in their acceptance of their oppressors (Spaniards) and describe a strategy for the independence of Venezuela. He went on to project the future status of Latin America as a great homeland not a colony. Many other documents also engage the archive about the correspondence between Bolívar and certain other historical figures related to the independence of Latin America, such as Fernando VII, Santander, José Antonio Paéz, Alejandro de Humboldt, and even the romantic letter between Bolívar and his partner who helped him in his military campaigns: Manuela Saenz; however, these documents do not have to do with education.

I will study the Jamaica Letter because it is the most important of Simón Bolívar's documents. Without it, it is impossible to understand Bolívar's thoughts and his relevance in the world history (Prieto Figueroa, 2006/1974; Molins Pera, 1998; Ocampo López, 2007; Acosta Sanabria, 2010; Roig as cited in García Monsiváis, 2001). It is also necessary to first address the Jamaica Letter in order to understand Bolívar's conceptions of education.

The Jamaica Letter (1815) is the basis for Bolivarian thought because in this document Bolívar talks not only about Venezuela but also about most of the other countries of Latin America. In this document, he expresses the idea of the need for Latin American unity and independence. This is significant because at that time (between 1810 and 1815) the struggles of other Latin American nations for their independence had not been considered a part of continental independence.

After his initial victories and defeats, Bolívar realized that the only way to achieve independence from Spain was to create a society-based fight for independence and to

spurn a notion that the aristocracy (*criolla*) had created at the beginning of the fight. As Anderson (1983) explains, the *criolla* bureaucracy created nationalism based on an imagined sense of belonging. Bolívar learned from Franciso de Miranda and from his exile in Haiti and Jamaica about the need to break down this particular nationalism in order to create a whole American homeland: *la patria grande*. This was a particularly delicate stage in which Bolívar understood the importance of the abolition of slavery, and he realized the independence struggle had to be carried out by the popular classes throughout Latin America (Molins Pera, 1998).

As Gustavo Pereira pointes out (2013), the Jamaica Letter is Bolívar's most important document because in it the Liberator reveals and expresses to the entire world how the colonized peoples of Latin America form an entire force and do not represent isolated points on the world map—an idea that was inconceivable in the nineteenth century.

Bolívar created the notion that Latin America had to be the most extraordinary nation in the world, a concept based on the freedom of its people. The Liberator created a special philosophical version of Latin America not as a problem, but rather as a task of independence (Prieto Figueroa, 2006). In this manner, Bolívar designed his own character as a liberator and the idea of America as unity. Arturo Andres Roig (as cited in García Monsiváis, 2001) defined Bolívar´s philosophy as a "*continuo ir hacia*" (continued progress towards a...). For Roig, the Liberator created not a totalized philosophy, but rather a vision of Latin American people as an open philosophy. Therefore, the document does not provide a conclusive synthesis but a continuous project for the future.

Unlike the rest of the nation's independence heroes, Bolívar created a vision of Latin America as a whole nation resistant to any kind of imperial invasion (García Monsiváis, 2001). Therefore, the Liberator conceived a special continental group of colonized people. The Jamaica Letter is original in that it emerged from the praxis of Bolívar after his initial victories and defeats. Bolívar's prediction about new Latin American countries in the Jamaica Letter makes this document unique in that other Latin American heroes who fought for their nations' independence addressed the social problems of only their own nations and did not project their domestic situation to those of other nations. Thinkers such as Miguel Hidalgo, José María Morelos y Pavón, José de San Martín, or Bernardo O'Higgins Riquelme did not aim to predict the future of their nascent countries in a single Latin American homeland. As Bohórquez (2011) points out, Bolívar's thought can be understood as a part of a "philosophy of independence" in the sense that Bolívar not only triggered but also produced the entire necessity of independence, and not only as a political and economic goal but also as an original philosophical strand.

It is possible to say that in the Jamaica Letter, Simón Bolívar was created as the Liberator. This document is a foundational text for understanding Bolívar's thoughts on education (Prieto Figueroa, 2006), because in this text he projected his future praxis in respect to Latin America (García Monsiváis, 2001). As a result, the Jamaica Letter represents the watershed moment when Bolívar the insurgent became the continental Liberator.

Bolivarian education has utilized Bolívar's thought as the philosophical basis of its educational project that aims problematizing capitalism and colonialism (National

Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007; National Bolivarian Curriculum for Primary Education, 2007; Organic Educational Law of 2009). As the Jamaica Letter is the foundational text for Bolívar's thought (Prieto Figueroa, 2006; Molins Pera, 1998; Ocampo López, 2007; Acosta Sanabria, 2010), it is key to understanding Bolívar's philosophical legacy and his views on education.

Simón Bolívar's *Discurso de Angostura*

I will study the Angostura Address because this document contains Bolívar's philosophical conception of education, especially because Bolívar formulated his notion of education as the concept of *Moral y Luces* (Morality and Lights) in this document. He developed the key notion that every constitution of the new republic had to include a fourth power (along with the executive, legislative, and judicial powers) devoted completely to the education of the people. In addition, Bolívar proposed the notion of the *Estado Docente* (Educator-State), suggesting that the state has to integrate all of its functions into an educative purpose to cultivate *Moral y Luces* (a distinctive way to name the act of educating).

After writing the Jamaica Letter while in exile, Bolívar returned and joined the independence struggle in Cartagena. On February 15, 1819, the Angostura Congress was installed, and Bolívar pronounced his famous Angostura Address in which he formulated his philosophical ideas about how to establish the rest of the Latin American nations as republics. The scope of the Angostura Address included specific guidelines for creating a constitution that would be the model for the rest of the Latin American republic's constitutions, and therefore this document paved the way for constructing the new republics.

It is important how in the Angostura Address, Bolívar formulated his ideas about the new republics in accordance with his notion of the significant role of education in constructing the Latin American republics (Molins Pera, 1998). Bolívar expressed that education was a strategic and necessary part of building the new republics. In other words, Bolívar's Angostura Address pointed out that it was necessary to construct new societies, not just isolated nations, and education as the basis of the political philosophy of the state was a key element in the formation of a citizenry for the newly free and united republics.

In the Angostura Address, Bolívar expressed his thoughts on education in a systematic and complex way, and he did so with the purpose of incorporating his conception of education into the constitutions of the new republic. It was 29 years later in 1848 in Germany when educative conceptions were promulgated by a state's constitution (Prieto Figueroa, 2006, p. xvii).

In his Angostura Address, Bolívar explained his educational project in the context of not only Venezuela's independence from Spain but also all Spanish colonies in Latin America that sought their definitive independence. In this document, Bolívar recapitulated certain failures and triumphs of the struggle for independence and formulated the concepts of *Moral y Luces* (Morality and Lights) to define education. Bolívar proposed the creation of a fourth power in the nascent republics. This fourth power would be responsible for education, which is key for constructing the subjectivity needed for the independent countries.

According to Bolívar, the fourth moral power is supposed to have two chambers: a moral chamber and a chamber of education that is designed to provide, regulate, and

guarantee education. For Bolívar, education had the same importance as the legislative or judicial affairs of the new Latin American republics (Villalba de Ledezma as cited in Prieto Figueroa, 2006).

Bolívar cast education not as a peripheral area of concern of the new Latin American governments but as a fundamental element of the new republics. In his speech, he described morality as the new subjectivity that should have change that one of looting imposed in Latin America after three centuries of direct colonialism. The notion of lights addressed the virtue of the people as the needed qualitative basis to achieve independence. Bolívar expressed that given the huge machinery of looting and corruption, in order to be independent, one must first be virtuous.

Simón Rodríguez's *Sociedades Americanas and Luces y Virtudes Sociales*

I will also study Simón Rodríguez's *Sociedades Americanas* (American Societies) *and Luces y Virtudes Sociales* (Lights and Social Virtues) because both works are two stages of the same intellectual work. Rodríguez first published American Societies in 1828 and he after published Lights and Social Virtues as a revisited version of American Societies in 1840. In this process, Rodríguez finally published his latest version of this intellectual work as American Societies again in 1842. Rodríguez (1769–1854) in this intellectual process made a complex diagnostic analysis on the newly born countries. As a result of this analysis, he proposes the need to develop an original model of education in order to convert Latin American societies to Latin American republics and nations (Graces as cited in García Bacca, 1990; Molins Pera, 1998; Ocampo López, 2007; Puiggros, 2005; Acosta Sanabria, 2010). Rodríguez pointed out that Latin America should create original educative models (even if this implies making a lot of mistakes)

rather than import foreign models.

First, it is important to mention that Bolívar's perspective on education has much to do with his mentor and teacher, Simón Rodríguez (Damiani & Bolívar, 2007). From the beginning, Bolívar's thoughts about Latin America was originated as a pedagogical experience. Rodríguez was Bolívar's teacher since he was a child, and many years later, they traveled together in Europe. When they were in Rome, Italy, in 1805, Rodríguez was with Bolívar when Bolívar declared his *Juramento del Monte Sacro* [Oath on Monte Sacro], in which he swore to liberate all of Latin America from the Spanish empire.

In March of 1825, Bolívar and Rodríguez met again in America and Bolívar appointed Rodríguez as the Director of Public Instruction, Physics, Mathematics, and Sciences of Bolivia, where Antonio José de Sucre was designated as president (Molins Pera, 1998).

Simón Rodríguez' notions on education vary from those of his contemporaries because he based his work on the recognition of the poor as an intelligent social force that was indispensable for the construction of the new republics. The wealthy and the majority sectors of the population rejected Rodríguez's pedagogical notions because they thought it was necessary to provide the poor (the Indigenous, Blacks, and mestizos) with only orphanages instead of schools. This was the context in which Rodríguez wrote *Socieades Americanas* and *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* (Ocampo López, 2007).

In *Sociedades Americanas* (1990b/1842), Simón Rodríguez expressed his philosophy of education not only for Venezuela but also for all of Latin America. This work is important because Rodríguez proposed an education system for the new countries

that reflected his idea of a whole Latin American unit and that emphasized that this kind of education had to be original and not copied from European or North American models.

Rodríguez explained that the new Latin American societies had been formed but not founded (Molins Pera, 1998). According to him, the popular masses had to be incorporated in these societies and not as only an appendix to the aristocracy's projects. This required an educational model based on Latin American ideas and not the implementation of foreign models. In this respect, it is important to mention that there was a key difference between being a society and being a republic for him. Rodríguez's *Sociedades Americanas* aimed to propose how to transform colonial Latin American societies into new independent republics. In this work, Rodríguez said that the enemy was the imitation of Europe and North America (Ocampo López, 2007). For instance, he alerted his readers to the absurdity of "*Traed ideas coloniales a las colonias*"(Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, p.90, my translation; bringing colonial ideas to colonies).

Simón Rodríguez formulated the notion of popular education for Latin America as a whole throughout the writing of *American Societies* and *Lights and Social Virtues* as a single comprehensive intellectual work published at different times. Rodríguez constructed the idea of popular education for Latin America as a unit: a unique proposal for the nineteenth century because it presented not only practices or anecdotes, but rather a theoretical work and a call for Latin American countries to be consolidated. It is interesting how this kind of effort did not materialize until the great Latin American movement of *Educación Popular* (Popular Education) in the twentieth century (Puiggros, 2005). According to Simón Rodríguez, if the government of a new republic supported popular education, there would be "lights and social virtues" (Acosta Sanabria, 2010).

Rodríguez elaborated upon the necessity of education for the new Latin American nations. He formulated his definition of education in using the metaphor of "lights" to describe the scope and means of his educative proposal. Rodríguez made a decisive break with the aristocratic education that the new republics aimed to develop: in this sense, Rodríguez understood the idea of "lights" as the kind of education that did not intend to construct hospices for the excluded students, but rather real schools provided for all students that would treat the poor, the Indigenous, and African people as equals to the *criollos* (Acosta Sanabria, 2010).

In this manner, Rodríguez delved into certain topics: (a) the recognition of educative social actors (i.e., the excluded who the newly independent society did not want to incorporate into the new republics), (b) the creation of an education system that took the poor into account, and (c) the result of this type of educational model: a real republic and not a colonial society. According to Adrianna Puiggros (2005), Rodríguez was capable of understanding the multicausality of the problems on the education for Latin America. For Graces (as cited in García Bacca, 1990), the production process of *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* (1840) and *Sociedades Americanas* (1842) involved the following: the first version of *Sociedades Americanas* was written in 1828 with further changes made in Arequipa, Perú, and *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* was initially written in Concepción, Chile, in 1834 as a new development of Rodríguez's thoughts about education for the new independent nations. *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* was released with new changes in Valparaíso, Chile, in 1840 with more reflections, and finally *Sociedades Americanas* was written in Lima, Perú, in 1842. It is important to mention that in this process, Rodríguez developed significant ideas on education, such as the need for making

original intellectual efforts opposed to applying the Western canon of thought to Latin America education, which was an incredible intellectual daring in the nineteen century, and I would say even today.

CURRICULAR DOCUMENTS

The Bolivarian curricular documents to be studied reflect the struggle to recognize that classrooms are not neutral settings; they contain the social struggle of articulating education within a new kind of socialist economy.

The constitution of 1999 inaugurated new ways of social participation, solidarity economy, and cooperativism. The creation of *Consejo Comunales* (Community Councils) was a way to create *Poder Popular* (Popular Power), which situated education in the construction of a new kind of economy and social citizenship (Fernández, Delgado, & Belloso, 2009). The Constituent Assembly and the approbation of 70% of the Venezuelan population of the new constitution of 1999 meant rebuilding the nation. In this context, education was part of the reconstruction of Venezuela and a proposal of a new Latin American, Caribbean, and most important, Bolivarian identity (Morán-Beltrán & Méndez-Reyes, 2009). In the years following 1999, the Bolivarian curriculum documents meant the philosophical struggle of determining whether or not curriculum was a neutral and non-political construction in light of Bolívar's thought.

On December 14, 1999 (Hugo Chávez took office on February 2, 1999), the Minister of Education, Culture and Sports, Héctor Navarro, released the curricular Resolution 259, which was published in the *Gaceta Oficial* (Official Gazette) No. 36.850, as a governmental act that aimed to transform the national curriculum into a Bolivarian curriculum. Resolution 259 was about changing fifth- and sixth-grade elementary

educational content by grouping together the social sciences into three new units: (1) Venezuela's History, (2) Venezuela's Geography, and (3) Ethical Citizenship and National Identity. As a result of Resolution 259's status as an official act, there were many voices against it, since opponents to Chávez's government argued that the new manner to teach social sciences was a political agenda and not an educative one.

The Bolivarian Curricular Documents in Context

Many critics have wondered whether there is a significant difference between the Bolivarian educational documents and actual teaching practices. As I will describe, some scholarship has shown the impact of the Bolivarian documents on teachers and students, nevertheless, the effects of the Bolivarian educational documents are not simple; they have created a discussion that has removed the veil of the idea of education as a neutral task among *Chavistas*, conservative teachers, and other social actors within the education system.

It is important to mention that the previous curriculum, the *Currículo Básico Nacional* (National Basic Curriculum) of 1998, reproduced a monocultural, sexist, and discriminatory model of education in line with private means of communications, whereas the Bolivarian curriculum addresses Venezuela as a multiethnic and pluricultural nation (Morán-Beltrán & Méndez-Reyes, 2009), especially because the latter has emphasized the Indigenous and Afro identity of Venezuela. The Bolivarian curriculum incorporates notions such as collectivism, interculturality, and bilingual education, which the national curriculum of 1998 did not take into account. This new curriculum challenges the exclusionary, classist, Eurocentric, Judeo-Christian, and racist traditions of thought on which the previous model of education was based (Morán-Beltrán & Méndez-

Reyes, 2009). Quintero (2003) analyzed Venezuelan official curricular texts and textbooks from 1944 to 1997 and found that Afrodescendant Venezuelans are portrayed as people capable only of doing physical labor or dancing. Between 1965 and 1968, the government of Venezuela, under the guidance of the Organization of American States (OEA), virtually eliminated the teaching of history by creating a complex mix of content that was referred to as social sciences courses.

Conversely, the Bolivarian curricular documents have pointed out the need to deconstruct the violence of competitiveness among students and have enabled Indigenous populations to produce their own curriculums using their own pedagogies. Likewise, people have been able to incorporate regional practices as valid knowledge, such as local dances into their schools' curriculums (e.g., the dance of *La Culebra de la Ceiba y el Toro de Ipure* in the Municipality of Acosta, Maturín, El Querepe, and Punceres, among others) (Ministerio de Educación y Deportes, 2004).

According to *Grupo JM* consulting services (as cited in Ministerio de Educación y Deportes, 2004), teachers in Bolivarian elementary schools have developed constructivist teaching practices; the convening power of Bolivarian schools is 13.5% more than that of regular schools (Calzadillas & Fabara as cited in Ministerio de Educación y Deportes, 2004). Manzano Kienzler (2004) found through participatory action research that teachers at the *Escuela Básica Bolivariana Simón Bolívar* in Tinaquillo State were able to teach writing as a creative form of expression instead of only as an instrumental means of communication.

Bjerck (2012) performed fieldwork in certain Bolivarian schools and higher education institutions[16] and explaines that according to his interviews and observations at the schools, educative social actors object to Bolivarian education not because of its pedagogical ideas but because it aims to deconstruct capitalist social values. Bjerck (2012) describes how a teacher named Meliton Adams recognized the importance of teaching using local knowledge, and one of the schools' principals, a teacher named Evelyn Ortega, explained that the Bolivarian curriculum has led to the transformation of cognitive-behavioral practices into social constructivism. As a result, the Bolivarian curriculum helps students be protagonists in their learning. Moreover, the teacher Leando Palacios said that applying the Bolivarian curriculum has enabled teachers and students to learn more about history: "Now we know better our history and our past; from where we come from and where we are going. The new curriculum emphasizes on the Simón Bolívar's history and Venezuela's freedom" (Bjerck, 2012, p. 72, my translation). On the other hand, Bjerck describes how a professor at the National Polytechnic Institute said that "…before the implementation of the Bolivarian Curriculum, many professors gave the same prominence to every course, but now, they have put more emphasize on courses related to social aspects and ideology" (Bjerck, 2012, p. 83, my translation).

The Bolivarian curricular documents have transformed schools in ways attuned to the key elements of the construction of socialism in the twenty-first century. Educative

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La escuela El Libertador
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Centro de Experimentación para el Aprendizaje Permanente Caracas

institutions are converted into centers of community activity, which aim to organize cooperatives, distinct economics, popular power, and endogenous development. Thus, education is supposed to be a key part of the construction of socialism in Venezuela.

Sansevero et al. (2006) identified important distinctions between the Bolivarian basic education curriculum and the one that preceded it with regard to teaching strategies for meaningful learning in elementary schools, specifically at the sixth-grade level, in the *Parroquia Santa Lucía*, municipality of Maracaibo, Venezuela. They found that the previous national curriculum, the *Currícuo Básico Nacional* of 1998, addressed transversality in learning but took a mechanistic and decontextualized perspective, whereas the Bolivarian National Curriculum for Elementary Education has at least contextualized learning, although mechanistic educational practices still prevail in the elementary schools studied in Maracaibo. Nevertheless, the Bolivarian curriculum has connected students with their local problems.

Camacaro de Suárez (2008) conducted a study with a teacher and 127 students in the José González school in Barquisimeto City, Iribarren Municipality, Lara State, during the 2005–2006 school year. She found that even though the Bolivarian curriculum entails constructing social learning (versus individualistic learning), the teachers whom she studied did not know how to change their ways of teaching to create social learning. For instance, Camacaro de Suárez describes how the teachers concentrated all participation on educative practices, whereas the students were active only 14.22% of the time. For her, even though the Bolivarian curriculum aims to construct social learning, it is necessary to develop pre-service teacher programs in order to better apply the aims of the Bolivarian curriculum.

Matos and Pasek (2008) conducted a study to see how 19 fifth- and sixth-grade teachers applied the National Bolivarian Curriculum for Elementary Schools. As they describe, the *Proyectos De Aprendizaje* (PA) (Learning Projects) and *Proyecto Educativo Integral Comunitario* (PEIC) (Community Educational Comprehensive Project) made students connect their classroom learning with their family and community problems. They also related how the teachers in the study tried to apply this kind of social learning, by generating discussion and generative themes, but had not yet organized this process in a systematic way.

Aguilar, Palacios, and Toro (2001) conducted a study in which they observed teachers' educative practices. They interviewed teachers and school administrators in three regular elementary schools and two Bolivarian schools[17] and found that 61% of the teachers carried out their activities in accordance with the *Proyectos De Aprendizaje*, and 80% of the teachers' school planning time was supervised. This underlined how principals in Bolivarian schools stay at school during both school shifts, whereas in regular schools only 16.67% of them stay for one shift. This is important because if principals stay for both shifts, they work in only one school, and students stay in school more hours, taking more courses such as those in the arts, and parents can also work more hours.

Through participant observation and teacher interviews, Gómez (2005) identified that in implementing *Proyectos de Aprendizaje*, teachers can incorporate students' local

[17] Escuela Basica Nacional "Elias Toro,"
Unidad Educativa Nacional "Crucita Delgado,"
Escuela Ecológica Bolivariana del Ejército "Simón Rodríguez"
Escuela Integral Bolivariana "Armando Zuloaga Rodríguez" y Escuela Bolivariana General de Brigada "José Florencio Jiménez."

knowledge. For instance, in the Bolivarian School Mendoza in Carabobo State, 67% of the teachers used educational role-playing games to connect students with their own local culture.

Likewise, in studying the ways in which teachers and students experience the Bolivarian curriculum, Josefina Peña González and Noris Ramírez de Guerrero (2006) conducted an action-research study to show how 40 parents created a reading circle in the Bolivarian elementary school Humberto Tejeda in Mérida City, Venezuela, during the 2005–2006 school year. They describe how the creation of a reading circle is a social and educative construction in line with the National Bolivarian Curriculum for Elementary Schools (2007), which emphasizes the importance of promoting critical reading in Castilian and the Indigenous languages of Venezuela. As Peña González and Ramírez de Guerrero (2006) underline, an outcome of applying these kind of new educative practices was an 80% increase in the external borrowing of books in the Humberto Tejeda school. More important, they found that the parents and children discovered for themselves that reading is enjoyable, which is an important advance because thinking of reading as an intellectual and emotional pleasure rather than a mechanistic educative process is a significant step towards critical thinking.

In reference to the teacher's role in the Bolivarian curriculum, Daisy Marina Fuenmayor de González and Doris Salas de Molina (2008) gave an account of how the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports brought about the transformation of elementary schools as centers of community activities and community participation, where teachers play a role as emergent leaders of the school as a community center. The role of the teachers are to identify, along with the families, the main local problems and

their possible solutions, such as garbage collection, public safety, or public transformation. The principle challenge of transforming schools as mechanisms of local engagement is that teachers have to teach their programs of work and they have also to participate in community activities at the same time (Fuenmayor de González & Salas de Molina, 2008).

Similarly, the National Bolivarian Curriculum for Elementary Schools (2007) has influenced the creation of school cooperatives (Torres Perdomo, 2000) as a way to engage schools in the national movement for the creation of cooperativism and associativism in Venezuela. In this manner, school cooperatives are concrete pedagogical artifacts. They are the means of a qualitative curriculum by which students learn other ways to understand economics and social interactions. Likewise, cooperatives have been used as a curricular tool to teach values (Torres Perdomo, 2000) in Bolivarian elementary schools when they are incorporated into the Learning Projects (PA) and the Community Integral Pedagogic Projects (PEIC) which are decisive elements in the construction of a cooperative curriculum (Chirinos Zárraga & Ortiz de Aponte, 2000).

As has been described, the Bolivarian curricular documents have represented challenges and opportunities to teachers engaged in their daily tasks, because these documents have prescribed students, without taking a neutral perspective, to connect their classroom content and activities with their community problems.

From 1999 to 2007 (the year in which the government of Venezuela released its most important education documents), the Bolivarian curricular documents represented an important moment in a still ongoing debate over the extent to which education plays a neutral or political role.

The described experiences of applying the Bolivarian curricular documents portray in some way part of the process of the re-creation of education in light of Bolivarian educational practices. Even if the effects are not simple, because these documents are the result of an ongoing praxis and debate between conservatives and *Chavistas*, it is clear that education is not the same since these documents went into effect, and the documents are not the same after being placed at the center of a political struggle. This is why the Bolivarian curricular documents deserve to be investigated.

The National Bolivarian Curriculum

The National Bolivarian Curriculum was instituted by the government of Hugo Chávez in 2007 as a result of a national consultation on Venezuela's education system among school principals, teachers, and even students. This national consultation was connected to the National Assembly that created a new constitution to Venezuela. The political goal of rebuilding the country was also a central element in the creation of the National Bolivarian Curriculum. This document is critical in examining systems of education because this was and still is the foundational national curriculum that broke down the neoliberal educational era prior to Chávez's government. This is the basis on which the entire educational system was transformed, and more importantly, it explains the differences of Venezuela's non-neoliberal education. This document aims dismantling the neoliberal educational system proposing a new Bolivarian one.

The first part of this document explains the organization and new management of Bolivarian education. Before the enactment of this new national curriculum, the educational system was organized as follows: kindergarten, elementary school (for ages 6–10), middle school (ages 10–13), high school (ages 13–18), and college. According to

the Bolivarian curriculum, early education is still categorized as kindergarten, but it is now called *Simoncito*, in reference to Simón Bolívar, because the kindergarten curriculum now covers politics and social sciences. In other words, it seems to try to encourage the discussion on how educational institutions are no neutral settings, even for infants. Elementary school is still offered to students of the same age range. However, education at the middle and high school levels was rearticulated into the creation of *Liceos Bolivarianos;* these levels are now a *Liceo Bolivariano* that emphasizes the development of educational projects to solve the community problems of teenage students. Before the National Bolivarian Curriculum of 2007, middle schools were attended by students between 11 and 15 years of age, and high schools were for students between 15 and 18 years of age. The new Bolivarian curriculum merged these two education levels into a single one: *Liceos Bolivarianos* are attended by students from 11 to 18 years of age. As the national curriculum for *Liceos Bolivarianos* explains, there is a need to incorporate both age ranges into one level in order to educate youth in a coherent educational system. In addition, the National Bolivarian Curriculum proposed changing school schedules: school hours changed from 7:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. This meant that the Popular Power Education Ministry (PPEM) started providing free breakfast, lunch, and a snack to all students, teachers, staff, and principals. As a result, the national curriculum proposed increasing school employees' salaries, an issue that has complicated the relationship between teachers and the government, because not all school employees are willing to be part of these changes because not all of them have received the salary increase,

In addition to organizational changes, the national curriculum primarily contains

curriculum changes affecting educational contents, the organization of these contents, didactics proposals, and a national rubric for evaluating educational accomplishments. It is significant how the national curricula describes four didactic hubs where all kinds of educational content come together: (1) environment and comprehensive health, (2) interculturality, (3) technology and education (TICs), and, most important, (4) "job liberator" The latter is a mandatory element in all kinds of Bolivarian education and has the student relate his or her coursework and assignments to the construction of a project that involves the research and solution of a specific problem in the student's community.

Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem's Curriculum

Since Chávez's first presidential term, there has been a massive national literacy program (*Misión Robinson*) along with the transformation of the primary education level into a different system called *Escuelas Bolivarianas* (Bolivarian schools). In line with the Millennium Development Goals, Venezuela started implementing the Bolivarian school program during 1999–2000. The program started in 559 elementary schools, and 136,293 students were enrolled by 2006. These actions were meant to reach the goal of universalizing primary education for every person in the country (Ministerio de Educación y Deportes República Bolivariana de Venezuela, 2006).

In 2010, more than 494,200 teachers worked in elementary schools, and 7,700,000 students were enrolled in primary education. The dropout rate at the elementary school level was 3.8% in 1991, but it decreased to 1.6% in 2010 (Gil, 2010).

The significant fact is that primary education is where the first steps toward socialism are taken. The Bolivarian curriculum for elementary schools is the curriculum that addresses in a concrete didactic manner the connection between education and

endogenous development as a non-capitalist model of development. While early education (kindergarten, or *Simoncitos*) tackles certain general ideas of Simón Bolívar and *Liceos Bolivarianos* (middle and high school) explicitly involves youth in community projects to solve local problems, primary education is the base on which fundamental ideas of a socialist economy and a socialist education come together. The Bolivarian primary education system is still the most important and foundational level for establishing the basis for the latter stages of Bolivarian education.

In this way, the National Bolivarian Curriculum for Elementary Schools is the official national guideline that organizes elementary education in Venezuela. It represents a rupture with the neoliberal education system that preceded it because it clearly states that the contents, aims, components, and methodologies of elementary schools in Venezuela are now based on historical social actors, such as Simón Bolívar, Simón Rodríguez, Franciso de Miranda, and Ezequiel Zamora, who had not been taken into account as revolutionary characters by the conservative education system before 1999. The notion of collectivizing knowledge and resources, which these social actors espoused, stands out as a core theoretical principle in Bolivarian education at the elementary level.

This national curriculum refers to the Angostura Congress as a revolutionary act and incorporates it into the foundations of middle school education. This means that in terms of revolution in historical perspective, Latin America as one single continent is a subject of elementary education, as is the second independence of Latin America in the twenty-first century. This is an important change in relation to other countries' curriculums for elementary schools. For instance, this means that children study a history

that addresses the constant colonization of Latin America by rich countries and the need for sovereignty and independence, not only for Venezuela, but also for all the countries of Latin America.

This new kind of education for elementary schools implied the construction of different didactic tools. For instance, as a product of this huge transformation, the textbooks for elementary schools explicitly explain the notion of the Bolivarian Revolution as a social force against conservative social actors such as media, oligarchies, etc. What is significant is the way in which this curriculum makes the revolution official for kids in educational terms.

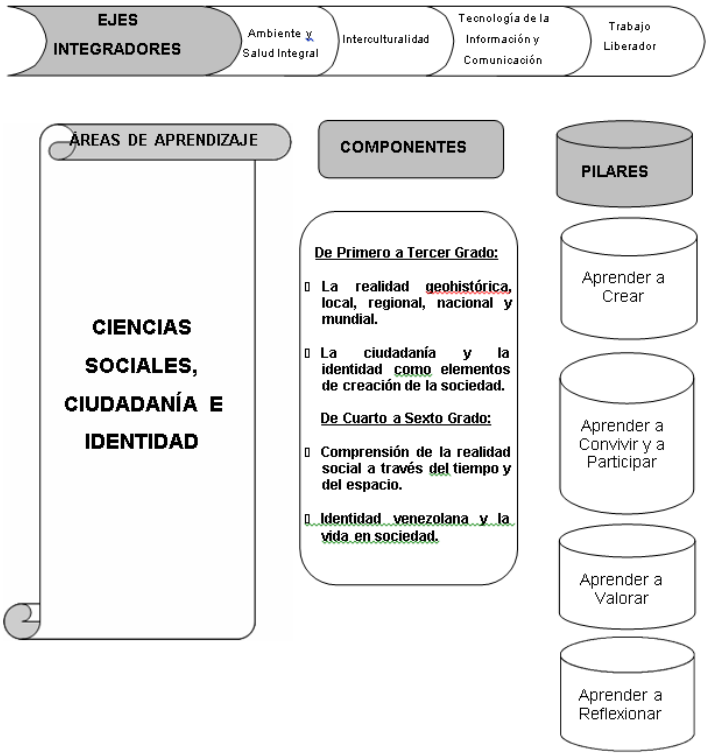

Figure 6. Source: Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación Popular, Bolivarian Curriculum for Elementary Schools, 2007b, didactic section, p. 27.

The government of Venezuela released its educational curriculum in 2007, five years after the attempted coup d'état against Hugo Chávez in 2002. This political environment contributed to the creation of a national curriculum for elementary schools that in general emphasizes the media's role in democracy, because media was a key social actor in the attempted coup d'état. As a result, media was portrayed as a problematic social actor in some of the textbooks for elementary schools. Figure 6 describes how the content of social sciences for primary education addresses social actors as constructors of reality.

It is significant that this kind of content cites Latin American thinkers, such as Bolívar, Miranda, and Rodríguez, as forming "the" framework for understanding social sciences for children In terms of didactics, the Bolivarian Curriculum for Elementary Schools presents national guidelines for incorporating the didactic hubs of the four learning areas: environment and comprehensive health, interculturality, technology and education (TICs), and job liberator. The four learning areas for elementary education are (1) language, communication, and culture; (2) mathematics, natural sciences, and society; (3) social sciences, citizenship, and identity; and (4) physical education, sports, and recreation. This means that the second didactic hub, interculturality, is not peripheral content, but rather it makes up the core structure of education that in turn organizes the other learning areas. As a result, the recognition of Venezuela as an Afrodescendant country is not an historical appendix, but rather it is a didactic hub that articulates not only history but also natural sciences, mathematics, etc.

Figure 6 explains how the four didactic hubs articulate the four learning areas for elementary education. Specifically, the diagram describes the way in which a teacher is supposed to teach the learning areas of social sciences, citizenship, and identity (e.g., relating the social sciences to the didactic hubs of interculturality and liberation work).

The Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem

A social movement called the educative constitutive assembly started when Chávez was elected as president. At that time, between 1991 and 2001, the new government put into motion a process of popular consultation that aimed to construct a National Educative Project. This social process had many internal conflicts because the Bolivarian revolution did not have the unconditional support of all of the social actors within the educational system. As a result, the government accepted that it could not impose a revolutionary character on education as a top-down policy.

The construction of education as part of a large agenda for socialism in the twenty-first century was not the initial goal of Chávez's government, given that conservative social actors impeded anything called "socialism." As Imen explains (2011a), it was during the creation of the Simón Bolívar National Project in the years 2007–2013 when the goal of constructing socialism in the twenty-first century started.

As a result, the educational agenda has caused an intense political struggle in Venezuelan society. In 2009, Chávez's government released the *Ley Orgánica de Educación* (Organic Educational Act). It suppressed the Organic Educational Act of 1980, which had represented the neoliberal plan for education. This new law was supposed to work together with *Consejos Comunales* (Communal Councils), which were

promoted by the government and popular communities to balance government policies with local necessities.

To redefine education as a constant political process of negotiation among teachers, parents, and communities, the Ministry of Popular Power for Popular Education (MPPE) issued the Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem (EPBES) document in 2012. As a didactic strategy, EPBES specifies how to plan and apply the Bolivarian perspective on education and explains the distinctive characteristics of Bolivarian education planning. Primarily, it explains the *Proyecto Educativo Integral Comunitario* (PEIC) (Community Educational Comprehensive Project) and *Proyectos De Aprendizaje* (PA) (Learnings Projects) in terms of specific educational tasks in the classroom.

For any school, the Community Educational Comprehensive Project (PEIC) means that teachers, students, and administration should construct a local project to meet a necessity defined and addressed by the neighborhood where the school is located. As the Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem document describes, it means contextualization is a constitutive element of the curriculum for an elementary education that belongs to the indissoluble family–school–community triad, which is engaged in a continuous dialectics process of theory-praxis (Ministry of the Popular Power of Education, 2012, p. 5). The PEIC encourages a dialogue among ways of knowing, as described by this document.

The steps to initiating a PEIC in a school begin with the construction of a local assembly composed of community members, the principal, teachers, and students. Next,

the assembly makes a map that identifies the demographics of the local community and its more important problems and necessities. This kind of work is supposed to be a part of the students' learning process and not just an appendix to the educational process; in other words, a PEIC is not an extracurricular activity—it is in itself a curriculum for students.

Once the assembly has identified some of the most important local problems, teachers have to incorporate these challenges into their classroom planning and scholastic tasks. At this point, the *Proyectos De Aprendizaje* (Learnings Projects) start their role in the elementary educational process. Teachers have to use the PEIC as a source of teaching. Their classroom learning activities are supposed to address the problems brought out in the process of the constructing the PEIC. A teacher can use one or more of these problems as a core element to organize the learning areas of (1) language, communication, and culture; (2) mathematics, natural sciences, and society; (3) social sciences, citizenship, and identity; and (4) physical education, sports, and recreation.

The importance of Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem is that it is a national document that represents a political effort; it is a product of a constant political conflict between revolutionary and conservative educational social actors over the course of more than ten years, and it entails a concrete means of understanding didactics and curriculum as a totality in context (social construction in a strict sense).

The textbook for sixth grade "Venezuela and Its People, Social Sciences for Sixth Grade".

As the National Bolivarian Curriculum for Elementary Schools document describes, teachers have to cover four learning areas throughout six grades of primary education in Venezuela. Table 3 describes how the four areas of learning organize elementary education for the six grades of primary education in Venezuela.

The area of social sciences, citizenship, and identity in particular addresses the philosophical, sociological, economical, and political dimensions of the Bolivarian perspective on elementary education. As the Bolivarian Curriculum for Elementary Schools document explains, this learning area aims to develop the Venezuelan, Latin American, Caribbean, and universal identity of children by assuming a geo-historic perspective in which Simón Bolívar's thought is the foundational basis of learning the social sciences. Table 3 shows the weekly hourly load per learning area.

Table 3 *Weekly hourly load per learning area by grade*

Áreas de contenidos	Grados						
	1º	2º	3º	4º	5º	6º	Total
Lenguaje, Comunicación y Cultura	6	6	6	6	6	6	36
Ciencias Sociales, Ciudadaní	5	5	5	6	6	6	36
Matemática, Ciencias	6	6	6	6	6	6	36
Educación Física, Deportes y Recreación	1	1	1	3	3	3	12
Total General	18	18	18	21	21	21	111

Note. Source: The Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem's Curriculum, 2007,p. 98).

The first-grade curriculum seeks to introduce students to the ideas of Simón Bolívar, Simón Rodríguez, Francisco de Miranda, Ezequiel Zamora, and Antonio José de Sucre, and the second-, third-, and fourth-grade contents attempt to discuss the goal of these historical figures in relation to the development of Venezuelan and Latin American society. The fifth-grade contents start to problematize certain notions regarding Venezuela's resources, such as oil, landmines, water, coastlines, etc.

The textbook "Venezuela and Its People, Social Sciences for Sixth Grade" (Bracho Arcilla & León de Hurtado, 2013) talks primarily about the role of economic resources in the construction of contemporary society in Venezuela. For instance, this textbook includes sections specifically about the connections among geography, history, economics, and oil; a section about Latin America and globalization; and a special part that refers to Chávez as a "president with a different style of governing" (2013, p. 136).

In contrast to the social science textbooks for other grades, this textbook is unique because it includes such notions as endogenous development and social property as educative content for the first time in Bolivarian elementary education. This subject is a decisive factor: It represents the basis of the Bolivarian revolution because teaching endogenous development as the opposite of the neoliberal free market, and social property as the opposite of private property, provides the foundation needed to develop further levels of education. For instance, the section about endogenous development explains that it is necessary to destroy relationships of domination and submission in Venezuelan society in order to construct socially owned enterprises:

> *El desarrollo endógeno es uno de los componentes para lograr una sociedad incluyente, sin las relaciones de dominación que privilegien a grupos minoritarios sobre mayorías empobrecidas. Todos los recursos de cada comunidad deben ser utilizados para alcanzar su soberanía productiva y su independencia económica, creando empresas de propiedad social* (Bracho Arcilla & León de Hurtado, 2013, p. 131, my translation; Endogenous development is one of the elements needed to construct an inclusive society, without relationships of domination and submission that only benefit privileged minority groups over the poor masses. All of the resources from any community have to be used to reach sovereignty of production and economic independency in the creation of socially owned enterprises).

The sixth-grade textbook "Venezuela and Its People, Social Sciences for Sixth Grade" by Bracho Arcilla and León de Hurtado presents decisive didactic material that exposes elementary school students to not only a new kind of education, but also a new kind of economy and society for Venezuela and the rest of Latin America.

The aforementioned curricular documents are the result of a continuing discussion in Venezuelan society, and specially the theoretical and philosophical basis of the Bolivarian education remains about Simón Bolívar's ideas and Simón Rodríguez's philosophy of education is still in discussion because it has not been easy understanding those Latin American thinker's legacy in philosophical terms due to only Western thought was considered in that regard.

For the purpose of this study, applying the analectical method to the selected documents means examining to what extent Xirau's images and Xirau philosophical notion of "presence"(1993) match or do not match with Dussel's concepts of totality, exteriority, and liberation. Searching for examples of Xirau's use of images within the theoretical and curricular texts is an analytical tool that enables understanding the philosophical concepts in the documents. After this methodological step, the uncovered philosophical concepts will be analyzed through the lense of liberation philosophy. This will provide a way to problematize the philosophy of Bolivarian education.

In summation, Simón Bolívar's *Discurso de Angostura* (Angostura Address) and *Carta de Jamaica* (Jamaica Letter) as well as Simón Rodríguez's *Sociedades Americanas* (American Societies) and *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* (Lights and Social Virtues) will be analyzed in order to identify to what extent its images and philosophical presence ("the presence"as Xirau (1993) explains) match or do not match with the categories of the center's totality (e.g., European empires such as those headed by the Spanish and English). If Rodríguez's work contains images or a philosophical presence that support the idea that imitating Vigotsky's educational perspective is necessary for constructing education systems in Latin America, then Bolivarian education does not challenge the totality of Western epistemological dominance.

As explained in the sections on methodology, the analectic method, with regard to curriculum documents, will try to identify to what extent the images and "the presence"(Xirau, 1993) within the *Curriculum Nacional Bolivariano* or the sixth-grade textbook *Venezuela y su gente, Ciencias sociales para sexto grado* open Bolivarian

education to the exteriority (Dussel, 1985/1980) of the Other (e.g., the colonized Latin American people). The analectical method will try to address these kinds of questions.

The analectical method implies seeking an *ana-logos*, i.e., a different way of viewing reality. It will be interesting to research and find out how the Bolivarian education system represents an alter-logos for Latin America**.**

CONCLUSION

The notion of "collecting data" suggests a colonialist idea that the world is "out there" to "be discovered." Postcolonial theory would say that this wording falls within the modernist canon and is using a euphemism instead of just saying "to be conquered." In the previous section, the outlined methodology proposed constructing a holistic bridge between an educational framework and data. Taking into account that data is also the result of another bridge between research and the social world's complexity, my methodology outlined a goal for building an original philosophical approach.

In the case of this study, my process is guided by specific questions about the philosophical basis of the Bolivarian education system. To respond to this principle question, there are subquestions that in turn methodologically guide certain steps for analyzing the philosophical basis of the documents. Dussel's philosophy of liberation helps us understand the possibilities and limits of Bolivarian education, because it is the framework that sheds light on the elements that a philosophical effort has to address in order to avoid another philosophical imitation of the Western canon. Nevertheless, it is necessary to construct a methodological bridge between liberation philosophy's categories of totality, exteriority, and liberation, and the documents of the Bolivarian

education. The qualitative landscape within which one researches education is dominated by Western intellectual discussions (e.g., modernity, positivism, structuralism, post-positivism, post-structuralism, postmodernism, and even postcolonialism because the latter uses European categories to problematize European canon). As a result, most of the intellectual qualitative efforts to study people's discourses import Western frameworks or categories.

This is why my study is meeting the challenge of using a methodology based on philosophy from the "Third World" (e.g., the ideas of Dussel and Xirau) in order to not only perform discourse analysis but also to create a new type of philosophy for critical pedagogy.

Chapter Four: The Theoretical Documents

INTRODUCTION

The government of Venezuela has launched a Bolivarian educational project that aims to use Latin American thought as its philosophical basis. It is interesting that this massive educational project does not resort to the ideas of Plato, Comenio, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Decroly, or other Western intellectuals on education as other Latin American countries have done.[18] The Educational Act of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela of 1999 established an alternative theoretical framework. Article 14 states that: *La educación regulada por esta Ley se fundamenta en la doctrina de nuestro Libertador Simón Bolívar, en la doctrina de Simón Rodríguez...*" (Organic[19] Educational Act of the RBV, my translation; Education regulated by this law is based on the doctrine of our Liberator, Simón Bolívar, and on the doctrine of Simón Rodríguez…).

The *Curriculum Nacional Bolivariano* (National Bolivarian Curriculum) that derives from the Organic National Educational Act states that it is mandatory to construct the educational system principally from the doctrine and thought of Simón Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez. As the National Bolivarian Curriculum describes: "*Simón Bolívar constituye la mejor evidencia del éxito de la Educación Robinsoniana, con una visión sistémica de la realidad para impulsar su transformación social....*" (National Bolivarian

[18] It should be remembered that Hellenism was the philosophical basis of the Mexican educative project directed by Vasconcelos and Torres Bodet, and the recent interest in Perrenaud's competency-based education in the majority of the Latin American countries.

[19] As has been explained in previous sections, "organic" refers to the fact that this national law aims organizing the educational system, in this case the Venezuelan one.

Curriculum, 2007, p. 10, my translation; Simón Bolívar constitutes the best evidence of the success of Robinsonian education, with a systemic vision of reality in order to drive it toward its own social transformation…).

In this way, Bolivarian education claims to have Latin American thinkers as its theoretical basis unlike the majority of Latin American countries. In this chapter, I analyze the figures upon whom the Bolivarian educative project bases its basic tenets. What is the view of Simón Bolívar and his teacher Simón Rodríguez toward education? Is the fact that Bolívar's thought emerged from a pedagogic relationship with Rodríguez transcendent for Latin America? Can the philosophy of education be enriched by these Latin American thinkers?

In order to address these kinds of questions, I explore Latin American methodology and theoretical frameworks within the documents upon which the Bolivarian National Curriculum claims to base its model, such as the *Discurso de Angostura* (Angostura Address) and the famous *Carta de Jamaica* (Jamaica Letter), as well as Simón Rodríguez's *Sociedades Americanas* (American Societies) and *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* (Lights and Social Virtues). Simón Rodríguez argued that the task for Latin American thought was to eschew Western ethnocentrism: "*o inventamos o erramos*" (we must either invent or err) (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, p. 88). In other words, Latin Americans need to create their own local models for education or else they fail by imposing European approaches developed in incompatible contexts. In this vein, I analyze the aforementioned documents using the coloniality of power perspective (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b) and Philosophy of

Liberation (Dussel, 1980, 1990, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 2007 & 2009) to see to what extent the Latin American philosophical basis of Bolivarian education could be of value for the philosophy of education.

BOLÍVAR, COLONIALISM, INDEPENDENCE AND EDUCATION

Historical Context

At the beginning of his struggle for the independence of America (from 1811-1814), Bolívar experienced difficulties in his private life. His wife died in 1802, and he felt indignation about the colonial regime imposed by the Spanish empire in the region presently known as Venezuela. After his wife's death, Bolívar traveled to Europe in 1804 and met with his teacher and mentor Simón Rodríguez in Paris. They visited many countries together throughout Europe. In Rome, Bolívar took his *Juramento del Monte Sacro* (Oath on Monte Sacro) in 1805 in which he promised to Simón Rodríguez to win the independence of Latin America from Spain (Molins Pera, 1998).

Bolívar returned to Latin America in 1807, and he began the military struggle against the colonial invasion of Spain. Nonetheless, on 26 March 1812, there was an earthquake that destroyed the cities of Caracas, La Guaira, Barquisimeto, and Mérida. Bolívar, who was the political-military commander of *Puerto Cabello,* lost military position due to the many uprisings triggered by the unrest that ensued after the earthquake. On 12 July 1812, Spanish royalists entered the city of Caracas. There is a historical discussion questioning whether or not Bolívar betrayed his master, Francisco de Miranda, who was arrested and sent to Spain where he died four years after. Bolívar escaped to Curacao and then to Cartagena, where he joined the fight for independence

again. He conducted a successful military campaign, called the *Campaña Admirable* (Admirable Campaign), in which he liberated Mérida, Trujillo, and Caracas. As a result of this, Bolívar was called *El Libertador* (The Liberator). Nevertheless, the Spanish royalists and the *Llaneros* (peasants) succeeded in organizing popular rebellions led by José Tomas Boves, taking advantage of the social resentment among *criollos*[20] and the rest of the society. Likewise, there were numerous internal disputes among independence fighters, and Bolívar was not able to reclaim Caracas. Due to these conflicts, he had to escape to Jamaica (Molins Pera, 1998).

As the following chart shows, there are important events in Bolívar's career that serve as important context to the two documents analyzed in this chapter, the Jamaica Letter and the Angostura Address.

Jamaica Letter

From a personal letter to a State paper

The Jamaica Letter was initially a personal letter to Henry Cullen, a landowner in Jamaica. Bolívar sought to disseminate this letter in order to obtain support from the British Empire for those who sought independence from the Spanish colonies in Latin America. What stands out first is how Bolívar changes a personal letter[21] into a State paper (García, 2001). In expressing his concerns, Bolívar creates a continental document that even today mobilizes people and their consciences. Bolívar's praxis was the source

[20] *Criollos* referred to people born of Spanish parents in Latin America. The Spanish colonial administration privileged *Peninsulares*, who were born of Spanish parents in Spain.

[21] The official name of the Jamaica Letter is "Reply of a South American to a Gentleman of this Island (Jamaica)".

of that document (García, 2001), since the Liberator wrote this letter in exile in Jamaica after learning the teachings of Francisco de Miranda, and after Bolivar's first victories, but mostly after his first defeats in his struggle for Venezuelan independence.

Table 4 *Important Events in Bolívar's Career*

July 24, 1783. Caracas, Venezuela. Birth of Simón Bolívar.
1804. Europe. Simón Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez travel together in Europe.
August 15, 1805. Rome. Bolívar swears to liberate Latin America from the Spanish empire in his "Oath of Monte Sacro."
July 31, 1812. La Guaira, Venezuela. Francisco de Miranda is imprisoned by the Spanish army, an event witnessed by Bolívar.
September 6, 1815. Jamaica. After military defeats, an exiled Bolívar wrote the Jamaica Letter to envision a new independent Latin America.
September 1815. Haiti. Bolívar took refuge in Haiti, whose president, Alexander Pétion, gave Bolívar a printing press, money, and munitions.
April 3, 1817. Orinoco River. Bolívar returned to America to continue the fight for independence.
February 15, 1819. Angostura, Venezuela. After the capture of the city of Angostura, Bolívar gives his Angostura Address, in which he presents his political philosophical view.
December, 1819. Bogotá, Colombia. Bolívar proclaimed the independence of Colombia.
June, 1822. Quito. Bolívar proclaimed the independence of the province of Quito, which brought together "The Great Colombia" nation.
December, 1824. Perú. Bolívar and Sucre proclaimed the independence of Perú.
May, 1825. Bolivia. Bolívar created the state of Bolivia.
December 17, 1830. Colombia. Bolívar died in Santa Marta, Colombia.

By that time, Bolívar wrote his letter from his praxis in his effort to liberate all the Latin American nations. He had received military support from Haiti's president, Petión. Haiti had recently ceased to be a French colony after an independence struggle from 1791

to 1804, becoming the first independent nation-state of Latin America (Prieto Figueroa, 2006). It is possible to say that Bolívar's recognition in the Jamaica Letter of the importance of racial constructions comes from his experience in the Antilles before returning to the continent to continue struggling for the independence of Latin America.

This document is a manifesto to let the world know about colonialism in Latin America and the destiny of freedom of this land (Lecuna, 1917, Pereira, 2013). Among other issues, Bolívar expresses his concerns over the genocide committed against the indigenous peoples of Latin America as evidence of the atrocities of Spanish colonialism. For instance, he speaks of how indigenous monarchs "…suffered unspeakable tortures and the vilest of treatment…" such as *"...rey de Michoacán, Catzontzin; el Zipa de Bogotá, y cuantos Toquis, Imas, Zipas, Ulmenes, Caciques y demás dignidades indianas…"*(Bolívar, 1951, translation by Bertrand, p. 108; the king of Michoacán, Catzontzin; the Zipa of Bogotá, and many Toquis, Imas, Zipas, Ulmenes, Caciques, and other Indian dignitaries who succumbed before Spain's might).

From "Tributary slums" to the Jamaica Letter

It is significant that there is an intellectual process in Bolívar from "The Oath of Monte Sacro" in 1805 to the Jamaica Letter in 1815 that ties together the materialist and epistemological dimensions of colonialism.

On 15 August 1805, Bolívar and his mentor, Simón Rodríguez, climbed Monte Sacro in Rome, Italy, and while they viewed Rome from a distance, Bolívar proclaimed the *Juramento del Monte Sacro* (Oath of Monte Sacro) where he swore to liberate

America from the Spanish empire. Among many things, Bolívar's Oath of Monte Sacro is a proclamation that describes how the Latin American colonies are strategic sites to develop new knowledge and practices of freedom. In this proclamation, Bolívar emphasizes how Europe imported its knowledge from the East (Asia, Middle East) and how Europe failed to create knowledge of freedom and justice.

Bolívar's provincialization of Europe would appear in the Jamaica Letter ten years later stating that Europe was not the ideal image of what humanity could be. In the Oath of Monte Sacro, Bolívar expressed in an apt image the colonial practices that Europe imposed across the world. He states that colonies were "tributary slums":

> *Este pueblo ha dado para todo: severidad para los viejos tiempos;…depravación para los emperadores; catacumbas para los cristianos; valor para conquistar el mundo entero; ambición para convertir todos los Estados de la tierra en arrabales tributarios*…(Bolívar as cited in Rodríguez, 1954, p. 354, my translation; This people [Rome] has provided for every eventuality: severity for old times;…depravity for the Emperors; catacombs for Christians; courage to conquer the whole world; ambition to make tributary slums of all the States on earth…).

Bolívar defines in a profound image what colonies are: "tributary slums". Ten years later, Bolívar developed this notion of what constitutes colonialism more in depth in the Jamaica Letter—a document that also entailed a political agenda towards the liberation of the continent. In order to cease to be "tributary slums," Bolívar thought it

was necessary to gain independence from the empire, which was Spain at that time for Latin America.

As Bolivar states, colonial regimes produce harmful connections between an empire and its "tributary slums". In the Jamaica Letter, Bolívar uses another image to portray how he conceives the colonizer: "…*todo lo sufrimos de esa desnaturalizada madrastra"* (Bolívar, 1951, translation by Bertrand, p.105; there is nothing we have not suffered at the hands of that unnatural stepmother-Spain). As can be seen, Bolívar creates the image of the stepmother as an element within his argument in order to describe the kind of links that colonialism produces: an empire that allows some countries to exist under its umbrella and in doing so the empire constructs its "tributary slums." In other words, a harmful stepmother creates its own colonies.

The Jamaica Letter is a manifesto against Spanish colonialism and coloniality upon Latin American peoples. That is, Bolívar in this document is describing the materialistic dimension of the empire's invasion, but also is alerting of the epistemological and ontological effects of that colonialism. In this document, Bolívar addresses colonialism as the key problem not only for Venezuela, but also for all of Latin America. In addition to this, he points out the need for independence as another destiny-ethos for colonized peoples. This is why it is a key document that gives a comprehensive scenario of the search for a philosophical discourse that makes sense of the urgency to cease being a colony. As Arturo Andrés Roig explains, (1984), Bolívar ties a "moral unity" with a "political unity." He creates a new "emergent" kind of peoples in this effort; in other words, his claim for a new morality for Latin America and the need for unity of

all the Spanish colonies into a new continental nation creates a new type of peoples with a different kind of axiological character: the emergency of ceasing to be a colony.

Angostura Address

It is important to remember that after writing The Jamaica Letter while in exile, Bolívar came back and joined the independence struggle again in Cartagena. On 15 February 1819, the Angostura Congress was established in order to create the Venezuelan constitution. Bolívar pronounced his famous Angostura Address, in which he articulated his philosophical ideas about how to found the rest of the Latin American nations as republics. He offered specific guidelines as to how to fashion a constitution that would serve as example for other Latin American republics.

In this document, Bolívar talks about the union between *Nueva Granada* (now Colombia) and Venezuela as a whole nation. The Angostura Address is the document in which Bolívar expresses his political philosophy for the newborn Latin American nations and which highly influenced the way in which the new independent republics were founded (Uslar Pietri, 1954). After Bolívar formulated this document, he succeeded in the creation of the "Gran Colombia" (The Great Colombia) as the union of the nation-states known today as Venezuela, Colombia, Panamá, and Ecuador on 17 December 1819[22] (Mijares, 2009). In addition to this, the Angostura Address was the document upon which Bolívar based the creation of the constitution of the nascent nation of Bolivia in 1824. In

[22] See the document 3945 "*Discurso de Bolívar pronunciado ante el Congreso de Angostura, en la sesión extraordinaria celebrada el 24 de diciembre de 1819*" (Bolívar's Address addressed to the Angostura Congress in extraordinary session on 24 December 1819).

this manner, the Angostura Address can be understood as the theoretical platform from which the new Latin American republics were built in an attempt to construct an entire single nation.

Colonialism as a Point of Departure

It is important to mention that in the Angostura Address, Bolívar formulated his ideas about the new republics in accordance with his notion of the role of education (Molins Pera, 1998). In the Angostura Address, Bolívar formulates his most famous concept of education in terms of "*Moral y Luces*" (Morality and Lights), and he proposes the creation of education as a fourth power in addition to the executive, legislative, and judicial powers. It is relevant that Bolívar offered these conceptions of education not only with regard to schooling, but also as a philosophical means to eliminate the legacies of colonialism in "Spanish America", as that part of the continent was known.

From the beginning of the Spanish invasion of America this empire imposed an immense bureaucracy of sack and plunder. The people who joined Columbus' voyages from Europe traveled to America with the express purpose of extracting and plundering as much as they could from the "new" territories whose owner was the metropolis, in that case Spain. This notion was enforced by legend of *El Dorado,* and other narratives about untold riches in the new territories.

Most of the Spaniards that traveled to Latin America arrived with this mentality, and they created an immense bureaucracy that operated with that same subjectivity. The result was a mass of *peninsulares* and *criollos* that made a living from the corruption

within the colonial bureaucracy, indirectly profiting from it or directly enslaving Indigenous and African peoples. In this way, the purpose for which the colonies were created (sack, plunder, and corruption) became the foundation of colonial society[23].

As Benedict Anderson (1991/1983) explains, the *mantuana*[24] or *criolla* bureaucracy created nationalisms as imagined senses of belonging in the nineteenth century. The perspective of Spain was that it was the metropolis and that America was a territory to be exploited. This perspective was completely institutionalized as a concrete and symbolic basis on which to impose colonialism. In fact, the fight for independence was largely promoted by officials within the Spanish crown's colonial bureaucracies, since those elites aimed to appropriate the system of pillage already installed when Spain transformed Latin America into colonies. This is why the idea of the nation-state emerged first in Latin America rather than in Europe (Anderson, 1991/1983).

Bolívar was part of that colonial environment. Actually, he started the independence fight with the *criolla* or *mantuana* perspective, but after his first defeats and exile in Jamaica and Haiti, he realized that Latin America would be independent only

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[23] Historical diaries, *crónicas* and other archives offer great means to illustrate this. Columbus' diaries portray the subjectivity and practices of this colonial condition of sack, plunder, and corruption. For instance, the account of the Columbus's second travel by the physicist Doctor Chanca of 1493 relates the plunder and genocide that Spaniards committed in *La Espanola* Island (today Dominican Republic and Haiti). See Martín Fernández de Navarrete's documents from 1765 to 1844. Additionally, literature offers numerous references to howregarding the ways in which colonial conditions created a corrupted colonial society. For example,Such literature includes the novel *El Siglo de las Luces* by Alejo Carpentier, *El Mar de las Lentejas* by Antonio Benítez Rojo, *El Periquillo Sarniento* by Fernández de Lizardi, among many others.

[24] *Mantuano* refers to the *criollo* elite or Spanish descendants born in America.

after eliminating the colonial condition of being a territory to be plundered. What is interesting is that Bolívar believed that the practices and subjectivities of corruption-plundering would be eliminated through his educative notion of "*Moral y Luces*" (Morality and Lights); with this perspective Bolívar is using the concept of "Lights" as the resignification of the nineteenth-century idea of "enlightenment" as the way in which peoples take a humanistic perception of life in contrast with European obscurantism. Nevertheless, Bolívar formulated a Latin American version of the concept of "Lights". He created the idea of "Morality and Lights" to express his ideas regarding the type of education needed for the newborn Latin American nations: an education for popular and virtuous independence, (Salcedo-Bastardo, 1973; Prieto Figueroa, 2006; Molins Pera, 1998 & Mijares, 2009).

If corruption is understood in a comprehensive manner[25], it is possible to see how the Spanish colonial administration plagued by corruption led to such terrible acts as the genocide committed against Indigenous and African peoples. This kind of international corruption concerned Bolívar (this is why he fought for the independence of the continent), but he was also very worried about the kind of corruption that being a colony entails.

The corruption between the Spanish crown and their business representatives in the Latin American colonies created immense European wealth (Prieto Figueroa, 2006).

[25] The most common sense of corruption is that one that has to do with looting of public assets or tax evasion, but if this phenomena is understood more deeply we can see that corruption also entails also crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In fact, in this context, prejudicing private property was more delinquent than undermining the public property (Salcedo-Bastardo, 1977). Bolívar lamented this colonial scenario: "*Nuestros negocios americanos no pueden ir bien siempre porque pertenecen a la mitad de un planeta: cuando en una parte va bien otra se descompone, y Vd sabe que la libertad se halla de ordinario enferma de anarquía…. Las malas leyes y una administración deshonesta han quebrado la república; ella estaba arruinada por la guerra; la corrupción ha venido después a envenenarle hasta la sangre, y a quitarnos hasta la esperanza de mejora* (Bolívar, 1827, document 1356, para. 4, my translation; Our commerce in America cannot improve because it belongs to half of the planet: when commerce goes well in one part of the planet, it falls apart in the another…Poor laws and dishonest management have broken the republic; the republic was ruined by war; corruption then poisoned even the republic's blood and deprived us of our the hope of betterment).

In this manner, Bolívar uses the image of blood to denounce the effects of bureaucracy on the colonies: "…corruption has poisoned even the republic's blood". He recognizes that this kind of public immorality was constituent of society at that time and that it was not transitory. This is why he is uses the image of the "republic's blood," because corruption in how Spain managed its colonies was the internal force that made the machinery work. Nevertheless he uses the term "poisoned" since he thought that somebody polluted the Latin American republics, because the latter are not corrupted by themselves. They instead are the result of an invasion. In this manner he highlights that

such a relationship as that which existed between Spain and its colonies created a system of pillage that in turn impeded the unity and emancipation of the new republics.

Education As the Basis of Bolívar's Political Philosophy of the State

In the Angostura Address, Bolívar addresses his notion of education as the basis of his political philosophy for the State (Uslar Pietri, 1954). He proposed popular education with his notion of *"Moral y Luces"* and put forward the idea of creating an additional branch of government for education. These stages are part of a single process of his political philosophy of the State.

In the Angostura Address, Bolívar says: *"La educación popular debe ser el cuidado primogénito del amor Paternal del Congreso. Moral y luces son los Polos de una República: moral y luces son nuestras primeras necesidades…"* (Bolívar, 1819, para. 53, my translation; Popular education should be the paramount responsibility of Congress's Paternal love. Morality and Lights are the Poles of a Republic; Morality and Lights are our primary necessities).

As seen in Bolívar's most famous quote on his notion of Morality and Lights, Bolívar addresses education as the basis of any Latin American republic. Further on he adds: *"El progreso de las luces es el que ensancha el progreso de la práctica, y la rectitud del espíritu, es la que ensancha el progreso de las luces"* (Bolívar, 1819, para. 50, my translation; Progress of lights is what broadens the progress of practice, and uprightness of spirit widens the progress of lights). In this way, Bolívar is distinguishing that lights do more than just improve what people do; instead, he is establishing a

complex process for the construction of lights: first, lights "broadens the progress of practice" and then "uprightness of spirit widens the progress of lights". This process entails an entire goal of transformation of the qualitative basis that three hundred years of colonialism had imposed on the Spanish colonies, by the time Bolívar started the fights for independence.

Regarding Bolívar's descriptions of his educational project, it is interesting that he proposes popular education at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At that time, education was only provided to the wealthy population in Latin America. Just 0.5% of the Venezuelan population attended any kind of educative institution in 1830 (Carvajal, 2010). In that context of caste-based society, education was a luxury that affluent individuals enjoyed. Exile in Jamaica and especially in Haiti helped guide Bolívar's understanding that he needed to lead a popular struggle for independence that entailed education for all—Indigenous, mestizos, *pardos*, blacks, etc.

In this way, drawing from this perspective on the Bolívar's legacy, current Bolivarian education aims not to be a private commodity, which every individual obtains according to his or her possibilities, but rather a social right that the State should provide (Villalba de Ledezma, 2006). This is significant because it was not until after the social revolutions of the twentieth century that any State document treated education as a social right. Nevertheless Bolívar is not just laying the foundations for the twentieth-century welfare state notion of education as a social right; he is also arguing that education is the philosophical foundation of the State. When Bolívar states, "Morality and Lights are the Poles of a Republic; Morality and Lights are our primary necessities," he proposes his

conception of education (Morality and Lights) as the required basis for constructing newborn Latin American nations because according to him a new kind of subjectivity was necessary to project new kinds of independent nations. For Bolívar, only virtuous peoples are those who achieve independence[26] (Porter as cited in Salcedo-Bastardo, 1973, my translation, p. 550), but also from Bolívar's perspective Latin America will be virtuous when it is independent.

From the Angostura Address onward, Bolívar's emphasis on the role of the state in education and vice versa would continue throughout the rest of his career. If the debate is ongoing today, as to the questions of the extent to which the State should provide education at all levels, or if the State should privatize education, for Bolívar this point is clear in the sense that it is mandatory for the State to provide education for all the people. Education should be uniform and general, and all educative institutions should be regulated by the State[27].

Private education broadly existed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In fact, the common understanding was that education should be only for the wealthiest population since colonial society at that time was classified into *castas* (castes), so society considered blacks and Indigenous peoples to be undeserving of education.

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[26] See the letter from Jane Porter to Bolívar on June 23, 1828 (as cited in Salcedo-Bastardo, 1973, p. 550), in which Porter reflects on how virtue is understood as the way in which the nascent Latin American nations cease to be slaves and build freedom, fair laws, and solid education.

[27] See the documents "*En Cada Capital de Departamento Una Escuela Normal Lancasteriana*" of January 31, 1825, and the decree of December 11, 1825 among others in Salcedo-Bastardo (1973) where he describes the State's duties relating to education.

Schooling was an exclusive commodity available only to those who could racially afford it. Since there was not a comprehensive, bureaucratic education system at that time, the thought of "1. - The first duty of the State is to provide education to the people" (Bolívar as cited in Salcedo-Bastardo, 1973, p. 364) sounded like an outrageous idea expressed by a dictator. When Bolívar proposed freedom for slaves in Venezuela, since Haiti had already abolished slavery in 1804, his contemporaries thought that he was foolish. For instance, Bolívar's personal assistant, Florencio O'Leary, describes in his memories the moment when Bolívar asked the Angostura Congress for the abolition of slavery. O'Leary describes what Bolívar said as this: "I implore you to establish the absolute emancipation of slaves as if I were imploring for my life or for the salvation of the republic" (O'Leary, 1952, Vol. 3, my translation, p. 180). Bolívar learned the importance of abolishing slavery only when he lived in Haiti, the first independent nation in Latin American ruled by free black people with a black president: Alexandre Petión.

What is interesting is that Bolívar says that education is the "the first duty" of the State because he thought that the State should provide this social good or service on a massive scale as a governmental duty. For him education was the "first duty" for the State because it was necessary as a distinctive qualitative basis from which Latin American peoples were able to build their republics. The fourth duty illustrates the extent to which the State should provide comprehensive education to everyone since this duty is the basis for the construction of new nations that aimed to become republics: "4.- The Republic's health depends on the morality that education provides to citizens' childhood" (Bolívar as cited in Salcedo-Bastardo, 1973, p. 364).

In this manner, Bolívar had the Hellenic perspective of the state. In this sense the State was not only a political institution but also an ethical one with a duty to educate its people (Molins Pera, 1998). This means that a pedagogical theory cannot be separated from a theory of the State and the latter cannot be separated from the political aspect of the State. Education was an intrinsic political and ethical construction, as was the State. The conception of education as a technical issue isolated from ethics and politics is inconceivable in this perspective of the State and education. Bolívar drew from these ideas, and this is why he proposed popular education not in bureaucratic terms but rather as a necessary step (not only mandatory) towards the end of basing the State in another ethical foundation.

Morality and Lights

When in the Angostura Address Bolívar says, "*Moral y luces son los Polos de una República: moral y luces son nuestras primeras necesidades"* (Bolívar, 1819, para. 53, my translation; Morals and Lights are the Poles of a Republic; Morals and Lights are our primary necessities) he is also saying that new republics (i.e., no more colonies) cannot exist without his notion of education (Morality and Lights), which entails a resignification of the idea of lights from the Enlightenment tradition. In his concept of Morality and Lights he is also presenting a morality which is opposed to the logic of plundering that impeded Latin America from breaking with the Spanish empire, since that structural exploitation and its qualitative legacy was fundamental for the circulation of wealth from the colonies to Europe.

Bolívar was introduced to Enlightenment authors such as Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, and Montesquieu through his mentor, Simón Rodríguez and his travels throughout Europe. Nevertheless, in his "Oath of Monte Sacro," Bolívar highlighted the need to avoid imitating European thought because it did not pose the right answer to humanity. Instead, Bolívar tried to resignify and create new proposals for colonial Latin America. On the topic of education he echoed the concept of Morality and Lights. It is interesting that Bolívar used a metaphor (Morality and Lights) to present his idea of what education means. This was not strange in Latin America, because metaphors can suggest the perplexities of an idea. In this sense the metaphor's eloquence is more powerful than the accuracy of the idea (Bernárdez, 2010).

Bolívar uses the "Morality and Lights" binomial to project (not to define) an eloquent, distinctive kind of education for the newly liberated colonized peoples. For him "Morality" meant the need to address a new type of subjectivity required to erect a new social order. In this sense, a new kind of Morality was necessary in order to deconstruct the subjectivity of plundering that the Spanish bureaucracy had imposed upon the colonized territories in America[28]. The concept of "Lights" suggests more than just a defined concept, but a place to arrive to or a presence (Xirau, 1993 and 1997). As Bolívar states, for him it is important to shape carefully the kind of education that the heirs of

[28] For instance, see Document 565, "*Discursos Pronunciados Por El Libertador En La Asamblea Celebrada En Caracas El Día 2 De Enero De 1814 En El Convento De Religiosos Franciscanos,*" in which Bolívar urges to stop robbing the State treasury.

national independence will receive[29]. In this way, "Lights" is a qualitative place to which education should transport students in order to make them understand the importance of being independent and virtuous.

In this manner, Bolívar's concept of "Morality and Lights" represents an interesting resignification of the Enlightenment idea of education. For Rousseau public education presupposes first the existence of free people whereas for Bolívar freedom is achieved by means of education (Prieto Figueroa, 2006).

For Bolívar, immorality means the lack of conscientization needed for the construction of the emancipation of the Spanish territories. As he explains in his document "Essay on Public Education" from 1825, what should have been avoided was having "*hombres gravados en unos preceptos, que unos preceptos gravados en hombres*" (Bolívar, 1950, pp. 835–6, and 1951, translated by Bertrand, p. 557; men ingrained in principles rather than having the principles ingrained in them). This is why it was necessary to construct "Morality and Lights" in the process of gaining independence from the empire.

What Bolívar tried to do was transform Latin American peoples from slaves into citizens, which he describes as "carriers of lights" (Villalba de Ledezma, 2006). In the Angostura Address, Bolívar addresses how in his conception of education (Morality and Lights) knowledge and virtue are linked with the State's power, unlike many current

[29] See Document 177, "*Gaceta De Colombia. Nº 354. 26 De Junio De 1828. O.C.B. Discurso Del Libertador Simón Bolívar En Acto Político Con Motivo De Su Entrada A Bogotá, Procedente De Bucaramanga, Después De La Disolución De La Convención De Ocaña. Bogotá, 24 De Junio De 1828."*

political philosophical approaches in the twenty-first century that isolate power from virtue and knowledge. From Bolívar's perspective, education is the foundational element of this political philosophy. In other words, it is not a peripheral service that the state can offer, but rather a philosophical policy necessary to build a state. At that time, for European countries it was only necessary that the State provide education in a massive manner, since European states were already founded and they were not colonies. Nevertheless, for Bolívar, in the recently liberated colonized territories, it was first necessary to enact philosophical policies (education) from which it would be possible to fashion political policies (e.g., laws, governmental public institutions) because it was necessary to first dismantle the subjectivity of plundering the colonialism imposed upon Latin American territories and then erect new republics. This is why he proposed, along with the executive, legislative, and judicial powers, the creation of a fourth power over education.

In this sense, education was the basis of Bolívar's political philosophy in which the state operates as an ethical entity with the aim of instructing individuals to reject the corrupt system of sack and plunder that the Spanish colonial regime produced in the American colonies. This is why for him the state's first duty is to provide education to everyone as the constitutive element of the new independent states.

In fact, Bolívar describes in the Angostura Address the qualitative character of the society produced by Spanish colonialism, which he believes should be dismantled through "Morality and Lights":

Uncido [sacrificado] el Pueblo Americano con el triple yugo de la ignorancia, de la tiranía y del vicio, no hemos podido adquirir ni saber, ni poder ni virtud. Discípulos de tan perniciosos maestros, las lecciones que hemos recibido, y los ejemplos que hemos estudiado, son los más destructores. Por el engaño se nos ha dominado mas que por la fuerza, y por el vicio se nos ha degradado mas bien que por la Superstición. La Esclavitud es la hija de las Tinieblas, un Pueblo ignorante es un instrumento ciego de sus propia destrucción: la ambición, la intriga abusan de la credulidad y la inesperiencia de hombres agenos de todo conocimiento político, económico o civil: adoptan como realidades las que no son puras ilusiones; toman la licencia por la Libertad; la traición por el Patriotismo, la venganza por la justicia (Bolívar, 1819, para 11, my translation; Subject to the threefold yoke of ignorance, tyranny, and vice, the people of Latin America have failed to acquire knowledge, power, or [civic] virtue. As pupils of such pernicious teachers, the lessons we have received and the examples we have studied are the most destructive ones. We have been ruled more by deceit than by force, and we have been degraded more by vice than by superstition. Slavery is the daughter of Darkness: an ignorant people is a blind instrument that brings on its own destruction. Ambition and intrigue abuse the gullibility and inexperience of men lacking any political, economic, and civic knowledge; they adopt pure illusion as reality; they mistake license for liberty, treachery for patriotism, and vengeance for justice).

As can be seen, Bolívar makes visible the conditions from which colonized peoples must try to build their education in order to be independent (or stop being colonized). Bolívar addressed those kinds of conditions in his Angostura Address to propose his notion of "Morality and Lights." In the above quote, he describes the consequences of how the Spanish regime saw itself as the "ultimate totality of meaning" (Dussel, 1978). Consequently, "we [Latin American peoples] have been governed more by deception than by force, and we have been degraded more by vice than by superstition." (Bolívar, 1951, translation by Bertrand, p. 176). In this view, the Spanish colonies existed only as pragmatic Others separated from the totality's center "where everything acquires meaning" (Dussel, 1978, p. 5). This is why, in his Angostura Address, Bolívar described that qualitative disarray from which he proposed an alternative kind of education to tackle the colonial condition.

Bolívar's philosophical project was to use his notion of education as a philosophical tool to shape the conscientization of the territories that had ceased to be colonies. In his perception, the philosophy that education can instill in new citizens is also a political tool to shape independent nations: "*Todo el mundo sabe que la religión y la filosofía contienen a los hombres, la primera por la pena, la segunda por la esperanza y la persuasion*" (Bolívar, 1823, para. 2, and 1951, my translation, p. 382; The entire world knows that religion and philosophy restrain men, the former by punishment, the latter by hope and persuasion).

In this sense the morality that his notion of "Morality and Lights" contains is a new subjectivity that is not only a positive aspect of the people but also a *necessary*

qualitative basis for the political construction of independent states. It was *necessary* because the economical exchange was not only a general kind of commercial exchange, but rather a colonial one, which entails a specific manner of creating flows of raw materials and in turn creates qualitative foundations to support that quantitative economical circuit. In this way independence can be achieved only through virtue, not virtue as a conservative purism but rather as a distinctive subjectivity towards independence.

For instance, concerning the connection between virtue and independence in Bolívar's political philosophy, Jane Porter, Sir Robert Ker Porter's sister, wrote a letter to Bolívar in which she told him:

> *[ud, Bolívar] dice a sus hijos que si no añaden la virtud a la libertad, por medio de leyes justas y de una educación sólida, seguirán siendo esclavos, esclavos de sus vicios, y por tanto, esclavos de cualquier hombre o de cualquiera cosa que tenga el poder de halagarlos! Sólo la virtud es independiente*. (Porter as cited in Salcedo-Bastardo, 1973, p. 550, my translation; You tell your deeply loved people that if they do not add virtue to liberty, by means of fair laws and sound education, they will continue to be slaves, slaves of their vices and hence slaves of any man or of anything that has the power to flatter them! Only virtue is independent.)

Jane Porter rethinks and describes Bolivar's approach to education. She underscores how, for *El Libertador*, virtue and education are the foundation of the new

condition of nations that have ceased to be slave territories or colonies. A new kind of education is needed to gain virtue because "only virtue is independent" (Porter as cited in Salcedo-Bastardo, 1973, p. 550, my translation).

As Bohorquez (2011) explains, Bolívar, along with other fighters, created a philosophy for independence. They designed a philosophy in which they sustain that creating a philosophy to gain independence from an empire is not the same as creating a philosophy in a general sense. In this case, Bolívar establishes a few notions of a philosophy of education in service of independence. In the colonies a distinctive kind of philosophy of education is more necessary than a general kind of philosophy. For the colonies the philosophy of education that is needed is one that helps the people gain independence from an empire. In this context Bolívar proposes his notion of education ("Morality and Lights") as an alternative philosophical project for the education of people who want to cease being colonized. "Morality" is the kind of qualitative basis that aims to dismantle the subjectivity of looting and plundering that colonialism had imposed upon the colonized territories in two senses: 1) the social logic created as a consequence of designing a territory to be looted, 2) the qualitative side of a quantitative economic exchange between an empire and its colonies. For its part, "Lights" is the type of virtue that illuminates the other-presence (Xirau, 1993 and 1997) to which the newly independent nations can go. If Bolívar's binomial image of "Morality and Lights" is not a complete philosophical system, it is possible to argue it is an attempt at creating the philosophical space from where the other (colonized Latin Americans) can emerge or

escape from the colonial totality in philosophical terms[30]. In this sense, the Other (colonized Latin Americans) is the precise notion by which it is possible to denominate exteriority as such in historical and philosophical terms. The Bolivarian notion of education as "Morality and Lights" is an example of the unrefined philosophy that aims to create an educational philosophy that will allow colonized peoples to emerge as independent philosophical entities with no master.

El Libertador uses another image to explain the role that the lack of an emancipatory education plays in the lives of Latin Americans: "*Semejante a un robusto ciego que instigado por el sentimiento de sus fuerzas, marcha con la seguridad del hombre mas perspicaz, y dando en todos los escollos no puede rectificar sus pasos"* (Bolívar, 1819, para. 11, and 1919, translated by Yánes, p. 20, my brackets; Similar to a robust blind man [the new republics] who, relying on the feeling of his own strength, walks along with the assurance of the most wide-awake man, and, striking against all kinds of obstacles, cannot steady his steps). In other words, the lack of a philosophy of education for independence impedes attempts toward constructing a path away from colonialism.

[30] It is not surprising that Bolívar used metaphors to portray his thought, if we look at Bolívar's concrete environment in which he elaborated his Angostura Address. For instance, Daniel Florencio O'Leary, who was Bolívar's personal assistant, wrote his own extensive memoirs on his time accompanying Bolívar. O'Leary in his memoirs describes the personal context in which Bolívar wrote his Angostura Address: "Accompanied by Bolívar's Chief of Staff and the Secretary of War, Bolívar made the trip, arriving in Angostura on February 8. During the trip he worked on his speech, in which he elaborated on the installation of the Congress of 1819, while resting in a hammock during the oppressive heat of the day or sailing in a canoe on the waters of the Orinoco River, or along the river banks under the shade of gigantic trees" (O'Leary, 1952, Vol. 3, my translation, p. 141). In this way we can see how Bolívar was directly exposed to the images that nature can provide while writing his Angostura Address.

In using the above image in his Angostura Address, Bolívar addresses the paradox of Latin America as a colony: Despite being the principal provider of the resources that Europe needed to assert commercial control over other markets such as those in India, China, Egypt, and Syria (Quijano, 2000a and 2000b), colonized Latin American peoples are like the "robust blind man" due to their lack of independence. Latin Americans cannot regain their steps because they are colonies. Even though Bolívar does not propose a complete educative proposal, he urges the creation of a new type of education capable of tackling the Latin American situation of being a colony. He attempts to situate the "robust blind" Latin American peoples in response to a need to reposition themselves with regard to a center (Europe) (Dussel, 1985/1980).

The Republic's Moral Power

As has been described, Bolívar placed education at the level of a fundamental element in his political philosophy about the State. In practical terms, he did that to such a degree that he formulated a fourth power, "The Moral Power of the Republic" (in addition to executive, legislative, and judicial powers), which was supposed to have two chambers: a moral chamber and a chamber of education. They were designed to provide, regulate, and guarantee education. For Bolívar, education had the same importance as legislative or judicial affairs in the new Latin American republics (Villalba de Ledezma, 2006). Bolívar presented to the Congress of Angostura the document "The Moral Power of the Republic," which addressed the organization of this fourth power in a public body called "Aerópago." Aerópago would exercise full authority over public customs and elementary education (Bolívar, 1921). This fourth power of "Morality" was supposed to

consist of one president and forty members, as well two chambers: the first one called "De Moral" (about morality) and the second "De Educación" (about education). While the morality chamber's duties involved condemning social vices and celebrating virtues, the education chamber's purpose was to create an official curriculum and provide funds to publish original works by local intellectuals (Bolívar, 1921; Salcedo-Bastardo, 1973).

When Bolívar gave his Angostura Address, he also presented a concrete project to the Angostura Congress that provided specific guidelines for creating and organizing the republic's "Moral Power." This detailed project is recorded in the Congress of Angostura's book of meeting minutes (1921).[31] In his project for the republic's "Moral Power," Bolívar assigns a prominent status to teachers. In Article 10, he states, "*Este empleo [el ser maestro (a)] sera el más considerado y los que lo ejerzan seran honrados, respetados y amados como los primeros y más preciosos ciudadanos de la República*" (Bolívar, 1921, p.158, my translation; This job [being a teacher] will be more reputable than other jobs, and all who practice this profession will be honored, respected, and loved as the first and most precious citizens of the Republic).

Taking into account the fact that for Bolívar it was necessary to dismantle first the subjectivity of looting and plundering in order to build new republics, it is understandable that education held such a high place in Bolívar's political philosophy. As a result,

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[31] It is interesting what Bolívar's personal assistant's memories say regarding this, since he witnessed the moment in which Bolívar gave the Angostura Address to the Angostura Congress. As O'Leary describes: "The more remarkable part of the project [the Angostura Address] was its introduction of the idea of a fourth power responsible for monitoring citizens' morality; discouraging ingratitude, selfishness, and indifference towards matters of public interest; and avoiding laziness, corruption, and bad examples" (O'Leary, 1952, Vol. 3, my translation, p. 179).

Bolívar portrayed teachers as "the first and most precious citizens of the Republic" (Bolívar, 1921, p.158, my translation) not just as a rhetorical device but because he believed teachers were strategic social actors in the construction of the qualitative conditions from which a new kind of Latin American state could emerge.

Bolívar tried to implement his fourth "Moral Power" six years later in the creation of the constitution of 1826[32] in the recently newborn nation-state of Bolivia. In the rest of Latin America, the 1819 and 1830 constitutions of Venezuela and the Colombian constitution of 1821 took into account the idea of the State's stewardship over education. Nonetheless, it was only in an attenuated form. As Priego Figueroa (2006/1974) explains, it was not until almost one hundred years later and after the first social revolutions that education was considered by a constitutional document, and then only as a social right provided by the state, as opposed to the creation of a Chamber of Education at the constitutional level as Bolívar had proposed in the first part of the nineteenth century.

Bolívar and His Philosophy of Education to Gain Independence

The Jamaica Letter and Angostura Address are more than mere documents. They are two of Bolívar's moments of reflection regarding his theoretical perspectives on the problem of colonialism for Latin America. In his *Juramento del Monte Sacro* (Oath on Monte Sacro) in 1805, Bolívar understood that the cause of the misery of Latin America was European colonialism. The Liberator would elaborate more on this idea in his Jamaica letter. He released this manifesto against colonialism because he understood that

[32] See Bolívar, S. (1826). Document 11128., about the project of the constitution of Bolívia.

the first necessary action was gaining independence from Europe, specifically from Spain. After his first defeats, in his exile in the Antilles, especially in Jamaica and Haiti, he understood the role of slavery and colonialism as constitutive forces of Europe.

Bolívar introduced an image to portray Latin America's situation in relation to Spain: "tributary slums." With this in mind, Bolívar projects a distinctive presence (Xirau, 1993 and 1997) of independence for the Spanish colonies in his Jamaica letter. The expression "tributary slums" is a powerful image to illustrate the role of Latin America in the international colonialism of some empires upon *the Other* countries [italics added]. As Xirau proposes (Cabrera, 2009), philosophical images express a complex idea that can be used in philosophical discussions. Colonial Western thought separated the fusion between images and arguments; after all "before the *ego cogito* there is an *ego conquiro*; 'I conquer' is the practical foundation of 'I think'" (Dussel, 1980, p. 3). The Spanish colonial military invasion in America was also an epistemological invasion, one that dismisses the way in which the colonized think about their condition of being colonies. In this manner, Bolívar's image of "tributary slums" points to the reality of many nations, and it manifests a philosophical presence of independence in the Jamaica letter. As Xirau (1971) states, what is relevant is not just focusing on what the images are but rather on what the images suggest.

In this case, Bolívar uses images to refer directly to objects instead of merely naming them. For instance, he uses an image to describe the philosophical perspective of what colonized people feel with respect to an empire: "The hatred that the Peninsula has inspired in us is greater than the ocean between us. It would be easier to have the two

continents meet than to reconcile the spirits of the two countries" (Bolívar, translation by Bertrand, p. 104-105). Images are a useful tool to revive a philosophy from the colonized peoples that does not use the same vehicles of hierarchical knowledge that the Western canon has normalized. The philosophy from the colonized peoples can feed many fields of knowledge, education among them, if one thinks of non-conventional ways to construct philosophy.

The modernist[33] philosophy was born with the goal of explaining reality through abstract numbers, trying all the time to think beyond regular senses. Copernicus, Bruno, Kepler, Descartes, and Galileo were great mathematicians (Le Breton, 2002), as well as philosophers. Since Western philosophy primarily emerged after medieval obscurantism, modernity signaled philosophy, emphasizing that rationality is the only way to grasp the objective world. According to this approach, anything else is metaphysics, intuition, superstition, art, poetry, etc. This epistemological division is the key turning point for Western epistemology. Knowledge was placed before and above being (Grosfoguel, 2008). For this reason it is important to research the philosophies of those colonized by modernist military invasions as well as by the modernist epistemology (De Sousa Santos, 2009).

[33] I am using the term "modernist" instead of "modern" as a way of demystifying the latter idea, just as I talk about "developmentist" initiatives instead of "developmental" ones.

For instance, in the Jamaica Letter, Bolívar created a special philosophical version of America not as a problem to be solved[34] but rather as a decree of destiny (Prieto Figueroa, 2006) that has yet to reach its plenitude. If conventional and Western philosophical analysis is used, it might seem that Bolívar did not produce philosophy, but only texts or "interesting" ideas. This is because Western thought has not recognized the colonized peoples' ways of constructing philosophy (using images for example[35]). After all, Western invasions were designed to destroy and wipe *the Other's* ways of living and knowing off the map in order to impose *another* map in terms of power and knowledge [italics added].

If philosophy is open to alternative knowledge and its distinctive ways of constructing it, this new process can lead to an alternative philosophy of education as well. Only by recognizing the value of the colonized peoples' knowledge production can we understand how the Jamaica Letter can transform from a personal letter into a State paper (García, 2001). In the Jamaica Letter, Bolívar constructed the idea of Latin America as unity against empires. In this document, Bolívar not only proposed a philosophy of ceasing to be a colony, but also a path toward achieving that independence through a united Latin America. While Miguel Hidalgo thought that Mexican independence could be gained as a single country, Bolívar demystified that idea in order

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[34] The developmentalist perspective has imposed on Latin America a vision in which countries of the region are separate and isolated nations that must fight to achieve the consumption levels of "developing" countries (quotation marks mine).

[35] The distinction between what is nomothetic and what is ideographic is the result of the way in which modernity created "serious" (Western) or "not serious" (non-Western) approaches. The destruction of thousands of Indigenous codices is an example of this. These "ideographic" codices contained philosophy. See León Portilla (2011).

to raise a philosophy of colonized peoples of the whole of Latin America as a "*continuo ir hacia*" (continuous going to) (Roig as cited in García Monsiváis, 2001), or a continuous project for the future.

The projection of a unified Latin America as the region's future destiny led him to propose a continental congress in Panama that would govern all Latin American nations and to raise the issue of what kind of democracy was necessary for such an immense nation (Latin America as a single country). As Subero (1983) explains, Bolívar writes within two levels of expression. The first one aims at tackling immediate or certain circumstances, and the second raises theoretical notions with permanent consequences in Latin America, such as the idea of the constant coming from or going toward a different future. As Dussel describes, (1985/1980, p. 11): "The emancipator heroes did not fathom the full impact of their deeds. The liberation of which the philosophy of liberation speaks was still an unsuspected future horizon."

Nevertheless, this kind of philosophy has been silenced because there has not been a philosophical discourse to make it visible. In other words, there have not been philosophical categories to see and recognize the *Other*'s philosophies; it is necessary to open the philosophy itself to the philosophical exteriority, which is the ethical face of *the Other* (Dussel, 1996) who has lived and suffered in the colonies. That is precisely what Bolívar tried to do. He attempted not only to create a space for the colonized peoples of America, but also to make visible a distinctive philosophical presence (Xirau, 1993), which requires recognizing the exteriority of *the Others*, this time without the

epistemological authorization from the empires that colonized them; in other words, it requires recognizing *the Other* as the ethical ethos of philosophy [italics added].

Bolívar attempted to evidence that it is necessary for the colonized peoples of Latin America to undo philosophical totality (Dussel, 1985/1980). In other words, it is necessary to break the self-projection of empires as the institutionalization of a closed, limited voice. The paradox is that Western philosophy presents itself as "*the* philosophy" while excluding the majority of philosophical traditions in the world (namely the other 80% of the world of philosophy). Bolívar questions philosophical ethnocentrism and demystifies Europe in his Jamaica Letter. The latter has been a manifesto that disrupts the empire's certitude from the revelation of *the Other* (the Latin American colonized peoples).

In the Angostura Address, Bolívar drew ideas from the Latin American reality of being a colony in order to construct his notions of education. As Bohorquez (2011) explains, Bolívar, along with other revolutionary figures (Miranda, Hidalgo, San Martín, etc.), created a philosophy for independence that is different from philosophy in a general sense. It is not the same to create a philosophy "in a general sense" as to design a philosophy that aims to gain independence from empires. Western philosophy was not created while thinking of addressing the colonialism in the world because the latter was not produced by colonized peoples. As Dussel explains (1985/1980, p. 12): "Modern European philosophers ponder the reality that confronts them; they interpret the periphery from the center", but philosophies from colonized peoples can address that *ego cogito*

was preceded by *ego conquiro*, and therefore knowledge production from the periphery can place demands for independence.

In this case, Bolívar lays down some notions of philosophy of education for independence, proposing his particular notion of education by using an image (Moral and Lights) as a philosophical category of analysis to address the kind of education that colonies needed in order to become independent republics.

The image of Morality and Lights can be used as a category of thought, since images can express more than ideas. They can portray philosophical elements that reason is incapable of capturing (Xirau, 1971). The need to stop being a colony made Bolívar propose a distinctive philosophical ethos, or what Xirau (1993) calls a philosophical presence. In doing so, Bolívar brought up certain notions for the education of Latin America in order to help colonized societies become truly independent republics. As Bernárdez explains (2010) in Xirau's work, images reverse the logic of Western thought. Images place concepts against one other, and in that effort, images lead to another philosophical space (Xirau, 1968a, 1968b). In this case, the clash among the ideas of Morality and Lights leads education to think of another philosophical space in which the colonized peoples consider their education through suffering, eagerness for independence, etc.

In the Angostura Address, Bolívar put forward some notions of an education for emancipation. *El Libertador* also demonstrated in this address the way in which he proposed education as the foundation of his political philosophy of the state. In this

manner, education was not solely a social service to be provided by the state. He championed the idea that an education for independence is needed in peoples who want to cease being colonies.

In the Angostura Address, Bolívar proposed using education as the basis of the political philosophy of colonized Latin American countries because it was necessary to reject the closed conception of the colonized as *Other*. Although Bolívar did not create a definitive educative proposal, he did attempt to take seriously the knowledge production of Latin Americans—which the empires despised precisely for being the exteriority of *the Other* (Dussel, 1985/1980) that was considered only as a pragmatic Other to be plundered.

In this sense, Bolívar brought attention to the problems of colonialism and the need for independence of the majority of the nations of Latin America. He was unaware of the term "capitalism", but the colonial dependence of Latin American and African countries gave birth to capitalism some years after (Quijano & Wallerstain, 1992a and 1992b). As the coloniality of power perspective addresses, the colonial condition of Latin America has not finished even until today, and it is interesting that Bolívar posed the need for independence at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but the colonial condition of Latin American nations increased to the point of being the basis for the future capitalist system.

Bolívar proposed constructing a distinctive kind of education to create independent nations, but what happened was that Latin America became only raw

material for the creation of a surplus value needed within a capitalist system. As Bolivarian education in Venezuela has claimed, it is necessary to fight for a second and definitive independence of Latin America.

As has been described, although Bolívar was only one of a limited number of literate people in the nineteenth century in America, he set down some interesting notions of the silenced philosophies of colonized territories in Latin America. His particular concept of education was reflected in an image and a clash of concepts (Morality and Lights). Although Bolívar's educational project was not achieved in practice during his lifetime, it was an attempt at creating a philosophy of education from the periphery in a philosophical map in which Latin America did not exist. In this way, the documents analyzed here can be traced as key moments in the construction of a philosophy for emancipatory education.

SIMÓN RODRÍGUEZ AND EDUCATION AS A MEANS TO TRANSFORM SOCIETIES INTO REPUBLICS

Latin Americans, who had long endured racial and epistemological struggles to be able to think for themselves, found a worthy representative of independent thought in Simón Rodríguez. Since 1828, Rodríguez had pointed out the colonial character of nascent capitalism in Europe, which led him to proclaim that the *Sociedades Americanas* (American Societies) were "formed but not founded" (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, p. 6). This implied that Latin American peoples were not yet independent, so he proposed both originality as a philosophical need and popular education as a means to transform their

disorganized societies into sovereign republics through *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* (Lights and Social Virtues), as described in his well-known works.

This is to say that Simón Rodríguez's thought was expressed in a single whole reflection in his two masterpieces: *Sociedades Americanas* and *Luces y Virtudes Sociales.* For Rodríguez both publications were two parts of a single comprehensive work that he elaborated throughout his life. While the first publication of *Sociedades Americanas* in 1828 in Arequipa, Perú was written as the preface to the whole work, the publication of *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* of 1834 was considered the introduction to it. This is why the analysis of this chapter tackles Rodríguez's works as a whole.

Contextualization of *Sociedades Americanas* and *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* as Rodríguez's comprehensive work

In 1791 the *Cabildo* of Caracas appointed Simón Rodríguez as teacher with an annual salary of one hundred pesos (Uslar in Grases, 1954). In 1794, Rodriguez presented an educative proposal called "*Reflexiones Sobre Los Defectos Que Vician La Escuela De Primeras Letras De Caracas Y El Medio De Lograr Su Reforma Por Un Nuevo Establecimiento*" (Reflections on the Defects that Corrupt Elementary Schools in Caracas and the Means by Which They Can Be Reformed"), which concerned the inclusion of other marginalized sectors of Venezuelan society such as *pardos* (the union of African slaves' descendants and Europeans or American Indians) and other *castas.* The Real Audiencia rejected his educative proposal, and Rodríguez decided to leave his position as a teacher in Caracas (Uslar in Grases, 1954).

Some years before Rodríguez left Caracas, he was a private writer for Feliciano Palacios, who was Simon Bolívar's grandfather. Fernando Palacios entrusted the education of his grandson, Simon Bolívar, to Simon Rodríguez. Nevertheless, in 1797, Simón Rodríguez left Venezuela and traveled to Jamaica, the United States, and Europe in exile. He changed his name to Samuel Robinson in honor of Robinson Crusoe. He would spend twenty-six years in exile before returning to America.

Bolívar returned to America in 1806, and Rodríguez decided to remain in Europe out of fear of Spanish persecution. Seventeen years later Simón Rodríguez decided to return to America. He landed in Cartagena in 1823. Bolívar knew that his mentor, Simón Rodríguez, was also in America again, and they were finally reunited in Lima (Uslar in Grases, 1954).

Bolívar appointed Rodríguez as the Director of Public Instruction, Physics, Mathematics, and Sciences of Bolivia, where Antonio José de Sucre was designated president (Molins Pera, 1998). This would be the final meeting between Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez.

In Chuquisaca, Bolivia, Rodríguez tried to create a vocational school, but parents and even the president, Sucre, did not like Rodríguez's perspectives. They preferred the Lancasterian School, which was in vogue at that time. Rodríguez thought that Lancasterian schools were just like recipes to make soup for thousands of children who live in orphanages. Rodríguez soon lost his position, and Bolívar died in 1830. Rodríguez wandered throughout Bolivia, Perú, Chile, and Colombia, among other countries, trying

to found a school and then tried to create a candle factory to increase his chances of survival. In addition to this, he made many efforts to publish his writings.

Nevertheless, Simón Rodríguez developed his deepest thoughts on education for Latin America in his analysis on how the *Sociedades Americanas* (American Societies) could be transformed in republics with *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* (Lights and Social Virtues), as the titles of his works state.

It is important to notice that even though *Sociedades Americanas* and *Luces and Viritudes Sociales* were published at different times, both titles conform a large corpus that Rodríguez developed throughout his life. While he owned a small candle factory, Rodríguez published the preface of *Sociedades Americanas* as an outline of a future project in 1828 in Arequipa, Perú. He moved to Lima, Perú, and he taught six children while living amidst of poverty. He received an offer to manage the construction of an aqueduct in Ayacucho, Perú, but he turned down this opportunity and accepted another offer to teach in Concepción, Chile (Lozano y Lozano as cited in Morales, 1990).

In Concepción, Chile, he implemented an educative improvement project in the Instituto Literario de Concepción. The following quote from one of his students at that time is particularly interesting: "He [Rodríguez] was especially focused on the spread of what he calls 'Lights and Social Virtues'. He thought that it was impossible to implement social reforms without talking to a new generation of students about corrupted and corrupting societies" (Lozano & Lozano as cited in Morales, 1990, my translation, p. 325).

Simón Rodríguez published a second section of his work in 1834 in Concepción, Chile, as *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* and a further edition in 1840 in Valparaíso, Chile, as *Luces y Virtules Sociales* once again, and finally the latest edition in 1842 in Lima, Perú, as *Sociedades Americanas.*[36] During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Latin America, intellectuals were devoted either to the construction of recent nation-states or to the understanding of Marxism. This is why Rodríguez's work has represented until now one of the principal claims for originality of thought. What Rodríguez's work recently shares with Bolívar's is the recognition of both authors as philosophers for the Latin American nations in the twenty first century.

Rodríguez's work (with two titles published in distinctive editions) is significant because of his elaborations on how the newborn Latin American nations should have been founded and not only formed (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842). He provincialized Europe in saying that Latin America was not independent yet and needed originality of thinking. It is important to note that those arguments stood out at that time (and even today), because the construction of the State in Latin America in the nineteenth century was accompanied with the certitude of Europe as the crest of human civilization. In that context, intellectuals aimed to become *letrados* (learned men of letters) (Rama, 1984) who attempted to use their role as intellectuals to legitimize the political power in the nascent Latin American states. What is truly significant in that context is that Simón Rodríguez emphasized that "America should not imitate slavishly but rather be ORIGINAL"

[36] The edition that is used in this study is 1990 edition from Biblioteca Ayacucho, which contains *Sociedades Americanas* of 1828 and 1842, which contains *Luces y Virtudes Sociales*. These were the latest editions of both books.

(Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, translation by Briggs, capitals originals, p. 286). In that sense, putting his ideas in the context of the nineteenth century makes Simón Rodríguez appear not only as a learned man but rather a wise man for Latin America (O'Leary as cited in García Bacca, 1990).

Table 5 *Brief Chronicle of Simón Rodríguez's Life:*

1791. The *Cabildo* of Caracas appointed Simón Rodríguez as teacher.
1797. Simón Rodríguez left Venezuela and traveled to Jamaica, the U.S., and Europe in exile.
1804. Simón Bolívar met his mentor, Simón Rodríguez, in Europe. They traveled together and visited many European countries.
1805. In Rome, Bolívar took his *Juramento del Monte Sacro* (Oath on Monte Sacro) in which he promised Simón Rodríguez that he would win the independence of Latin America from Spain.
1823. Simón Rodríguez returned to America.
1825. Bolívar appointed Rodríguez as the Director of Public Instruction, Physics, Mathematics, and Sciences of Bolivia.
1826. Rodríguez lost this position. He wandered throughout Bolivia, Perú, Chile, and Colombia, among other countries, attempting to found a school.
1828. Rodríguez published the preface of *Sociedades Americanas* as an outline of a future project in Arequipa, Perú.
1834. Simón Rodríguez published a second section of his work in Concepción, Chile, under the title *Luces y Virtudes Sociales.*
1840. Simón Rodríguez published a further edition of *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* in Valparaíso, Chile.
1842. Simón Rodríguez published the latest edition of his work in Lima, Perú, as *Sociedades Americanas.*

Notions Regarding the Connection between Colonialism and Capitalism in Latin America

The fact that Simón Rodríguez lived first in exile in Europe and then he came back to America helped him understand the type of relationship between European

empires and their colonies. As has been explained in previous sections, Rodríguez attempted to lie out a new presence (Xirau, 1993, 1997) to the new Latin American nations. Rodríguez's thought aimed not only to identify the problems of the new nations, but also to project a necessary scenario of consolidation of those republics which required originality of thought as a basic premise. That was the philosophical presence (Xirau, 1993, 1997) that Rodríguez argued the first political independence did not achieve.

Even though the coloniality of power perspective (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b) highlights how colonialism in Latin America and Africa made possible the development of capitalism, it is interesting how Simón Rodríguez in 1828 described the effects of the colonial relationship between Europe and the Latin American peoples. Rodríguez points out:

> Mucho traen los Europeos a los puertos de América—los retornos no están en proporción. Si hubiera **circulación de capitales** en todos los puntos donde se compra y vende, el **valor de los cambios** haría ver el déficit de las plazas. Los Europeos calculan . . . sobre su **industria,** y los americanos. . . . sobre **comisiones contra sí mismos**.
>
> Los indios y los negros no trabajarán siempre, para satisfacer **escasamente** sus pocas necesidades, y con exceso las muchas de sus amos. (Rodríguez, 1990a/1828, p. 32; my translation; italics and bolds in the original; Europeans bring much to the ports of America—but what they take from America to send then to Europe is out of proportion. If there were ***flows of capital*** in all of the buying and selling points, the ***exchange value*** would bring to light the deficit of

those markets. Europeans calculate their business . . . departing from their ***industry*** and Americans calculate. . . from the ***rates against themselves.*** Indians and blacks will not work forever to ***barely*** satisfy their few needs and to excessively satisfy the many needs of their masters.)

Rodríguez raises three interesting points: (1) what Europeans take from their colonies is out of proportion compared to what the colonies receive from Europe; (2) an unequal kind of capitalism benefits Europe but works against the Latin American colonies; and (3) race plays a role in the international flow of capital.

As addressed by Rodríguez, by taking as much as they could from their colonized territories, what Europeans brought to Latin America (what they named "civilization", "religion", "progress", etc.) was not equal to what Europe took from the colonized. As Quijano explains (2000a, 2000b), this unequal transfer of value between Europe and Latin America explains why there were sufficient resources in Europe by the nineteenth century that enabled the emergence of wage-earning employment, whereas at the same time feudal labor relations prevailed in Latin America.

This leads to the second point of Rodríguez's reflection that the same kind of colonial capitalism did not exist in Europe and Latin America; in other words, capitalism did not produce the same results for everybody. As Rodríguez states, the differences between exchange values would have revealed the differences in the flow of capital between Europe and Latin America, making it evident that colonialism fed capitalism. In other words, the commercial exchange between Europe and its colonies in America produced distinctive kinds of values. For Europe, that commercial exchange meant the

increase of its resources, whereas for the Spanish colonies that exchange entailed poverty and plundering. For Rodríguez, this revealed the differences in the flow of capital between Europe and America. That is, although this commerce touched both continents, it did not produce the same outcomes for Europe and America.

This dependent and underdeveloped capitalism (Dussel, 1985/1980) described by Rodríguez is an interesting example of how the people who suffer from this dependent capitalism are the foundational basis that enables empires to exist; actually the economic, center–periphery relationship between the "developed" world and Latin America (Alberti, O'Connell & Paradiso, 2008) also poses a philosophical problem because there has also been a center-periphery relationship in terms of philosophy. The philosophical totality (Dussel, 1985/1980) from the center has imposed a philosophical map of categories that enables a context in which only the center's philosophy is validated.

Rodríguez addresses how capital is produced:

> ***Para ser negociante se necesita crédito, y***
>
> ***para tener crédito .....capital. . .***
>
> o estar ***produciendo y ahorrando*** para adquirirlo. . . (comprando y
>
> vendiendo no se produce) (p.32)
>
> ***In order to be a merchant, it is necessary to have credit and***
>
> ***to have credit ……...it is necessary to have capital…***

> which is the result of the process of ***producing and saving*** **to obtain it**…(buying and selling will not produce capital) (Rodríguez, 1990a/1828, my translation, text's design, italics and bolds originals, p. 32).

Rodríguez's notions on the process of the creation of capital in 1828 bring some of Marx's ideas about the creation of capital to mind, especially those that address how the circulation of commodities is the starting-point of capital. In this case, Rodríguez develops some notions on how capital is produced mainly from the circulation of commodities. Nevertheless, Rodríguez emphasizes that the circulation of commodities does not enable any person to introduce him/her self into the process of the creation of capital. For him, buying and selling merchandise is not sufficient to create capital. As he said, "***In order to be a merchant, it is necessary to have credit and to have credit …….. it is necessary to have capital…",*** that is, capital itself is produced by more capital, which demystifies the idea that anyone who buys and sells merchandise can create capital.

On the other hand, the third issue that Rodríguez raises is key: race. The colonization of European territories (in Africa or Latin America) created a colonial modernist and Euro-centered capitalism as a new world pattern of power (Quijano, 2000a, 2000b). One of the axes of this pattern of power was racial constructions because they laid the foundations of the racial contract (Mills, 1997) from which the economic contract was imposed by the colonizers. As Rodríguez says, the Indigenous and Afro-Latin American peoples "will not work forever" feed the colonial exchange values and capital flow between Europe and their colonies.

In this scenario, Rodríguez states: "…it is necessary to start from social ECONOMY and POPULAR EDUCATION…" (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, my translation, capitalized originals, p.46) in the process of creating the new Latin American societies. That is, since he realized that the economic relationship was unequal between Europe and America, he tied a new type of social economy with a new kind of popular education. Rodríguez did not elaborate a proposal on education without taking into account two dimensions of European colonialism in Latin America: economical and epistemological colonialism. In this vein, he spoke about social economy and originality of thought in his educative proposal.

Originality as a Philosophical Need

Rodríguez claimed throughout his work that Latin Americans have to be original in their thought if they want to be republics instead of isolated societies. Simón Rodríguez emphasized this idea because he knew that if Latin Americans insisted on copying what Europe thinks, the type of relationship of colonialism-capitalism between Europe and Latin America would keep Latin America as a colony. This is why, after revisiting some of Rodríguez's ideas on how colonial capitalism existed as a result of the commercial exchange between Europe and the Spanish colonies, this section discusses the way in which Rodríguez raises the need for Latin American thought in order to cut the dependency on Europe.

In addition to his diagnostic on the type of colonial capitalism in his *American Societies*, Rodríguez pointed out that the transformation of Latin American societies into

republics required a foundational element: Latin American originality of thought. From his perspective, when policy makers at that time drew from Greek and Roman history with the purpose of making allocutions and proclamations, and when those policy makers discussed the model of the State to be imitated, they resorted to what the English do, but when they talked about intellectualism, they appealed to Europe (Rodríguez, 1990a/1828).

Living in Europe for more than two decades enabled Rodríguez to provincialize the old continent in terms of knowledge production and also to learn about the ways in which knowledge can be constructed or expressed. Rodríguez provincialized Europe because he considered that Europe was an old continent with old solutions, whereas Latin America was a region capable of carrying out what Europe could not achieve due to its ontological character of being an empire: freedom and justice. Rodríguez held the view that Europe was unable to understand what freedom and justice meant. Therefore he proposed originality of Latin American thought. This meant constructing original thought, and also having diverse forms with which to express that original thinking. This is why he used aphorisms, and distinctive text formats. He wanted to convey ideas and draw thoughts in contrast to the European canon.

For instance, Rodríguez uses an image (Xirau, 1993, 1997) in his *Sociedades Americanas* to describe the paradox and the absurdity of Latin Americans who imitated Europe:

Veamos
a los europeos,
inventando medios
de reparar un edificio
viejo, por no tener
dónde hacer uno nuevo.

Veamos
a los americanos,
en un país vacío,
perplejos, o imitando
sin necesidad, lo que
hacen los Europeos.

We can see Europeans creating means to repair an old building because they do not have space to build a new one.

We can see Americans in an empty land, perplexed or unnecessarily imitating what Europeans do.

(Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, my translation, textual design in original, p. 109).

By organizing his text into two columns, Rodríguez conveys in literal terms the image of a building, but he also illustrates the conceptual image of a building to better express the absurdity of imitating Europe. In other words, he makes use of an image in two senses that enrich each other, one that literally illustrates what he is saying and another that conceptually conveys his idea.

The image of a building is useful because it more explicitly expresses Rodríguez's idea. Rodríguez could have written many pages following the European canon to express his idea of how Latin America imitated Europe but he addressed the need of originality by using unique ways to express it. After all, the power of images is that they enrich reason in breaking the unit of rationality, as Xirau states (Bernárdez, 2010).

For Rodríguez, Europeans were trying to repair an old building whereas "Americans [are] in an empty land, perplexed or imitating unnecessarily what Europeans do" (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, my translation, p. 109). Latin Americans were "unnecessarily" imitating because he believed that Indigenous or African peoples were active social actors in the construction of their knowledge. He wanted to implement popular education in order to incorporate those sectors of the population (Jorge, 2007). Rodríguez states, "Napoleon wanted to rule over humanity; Bolívar wanted humanity to be able to rule itself/And I/Want humanity to learn to rule itself . . . /and among Napoleon and Bolívar I ask POOR STUDENTS COME TO ME (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, p. 60, my translation, capitals in original).

There is a connection between the need for originality of thought and the need at that time for the incorporation of excluded sectors of the population. The result of that connection is what Dussel (1998a, 1998b, 1998c) calls "*razón ética originaria*" (original ethical reasoning) in the Philosophy of Liberation. In this sense, it is possible to see how even though Rodríguez did not explicitly seek to construct an originative ethical reasoning,[37] Rodríguez made some important efforts in that direction in his claim for original thought.

For instance, for Simón Rodríguez, incorporating Indigenous and Afro-descendants sectors of the population was part of his proposal to create original thinking in Latin America. As a result, the conservative sectors of the Latin American nations at

[37] The originative ethical reasoning poses the suffering of the Other (and not the episteme) as the first philosophical moment. This is why the origin of that reasoning is the ethical empathy to the suffering of the Other (Dussel, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c).

that time sabotaged his work. When Rodríguez wrote his version of *American Societies* published in 1842, he was living between Perú, Bolivia (which have predominantly Indigenous populations) and Chile. As he said, the Latin American "…Republics are formed but not founded" (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, my translation, p.6) so then there were masses of Indigenous people, black people, mestizos, *pardos*, *mulatos, salta-patrás*, etc. In other words there was a colonial caste-based society also separated by the classes that Rodríguez described. This is why he talks about a "mass of people" that contains racial distinctions along with their role in the colonial-capitalist role of Latin America in the European economy. For Rodríguez, the political and educational models would have to incorporate the "mass of the people". This fact would force the new nations to stop imitating Europe and see their own peoples.

Independence in Order to Found Republics

The suffering of Latin Americans as a result of colonial capitalism led Rodríguez to construct his work to transform *Sociedades Americanas* (American Societies) into republics with *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* (Social Lights and Virtues) as described by the titles of his works. For Rodríguez, "social lights and virtues" was the concept that he used to address how the new Latin American peoples needed popular education and originality of thought in order to be independent republics. In this sense, originality of thought was necessary for achieving independence. Simón Rodríguez acknowledges that Latin America was not independent yet. As the quote below describes, Rodríguez even uses the adverb "slavishly" to try to explain why America should be original:

la INSTRUCCION PUBLICA

en el siglo 19

pide MUCHA FILOSOFIA

que

el INTERES GENERAL

está clamando por

una REFORMA

y que

la AMERICA está llamada

por las circunstancias, a emprenderla

atrevida paradoja parecerá...

....no importa....

los acontecimientos irán probando,

que es una verdad muy obvia

la América no debe imitar servilmente

sino ser ORIGINAL.

(PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

in the 19th century

demands A LOT OF PHILOSOPHY

and

THE GENERAL INTEREST

is clamoring for a REFORM

and

AMERICA is called

by its circumstances, to ignite it

it will seem a daring paradox . . . . . .

but that doesn't matter:

events will go on and they will prove that this is a very obvious truth:

America should not imitate slavishly but rather be ORIGINAL)

(Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, translation by Briggs, text's design, italics and bolds originals, p. 286).

For Rodríguez "republics are formed but not founded" because independence had not been achieved yet. In relation to this point, he adds, "The condition of America is not being independent, but rather living in a cease-fire" (Rodríguez, 1990a/1828, p. 19, my translation,). In this scenario he says that "America should not imitate slavishly but rather be ORIGINAL" (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, translation by Briggs, text's design, italics and bolds originals, p. 286).

If a colony does not gain independence from its empire (in this case Spain), colonialism still exists. Rodríguez makes use of another image to express his idea of independence: "In America what has been obtained is not independence but rather an

armistice in the War that will decide it" (Rodríguez, 1990a1828, p. 19, translation by Briggs). The image of Latin Americans living in an armistice or a cease-fire that will decide its independence is interesting because that idea is what Xirau points out are images as philosophical arguments (1968a, 1968b, 1971, 1995) which led to the philosophical presence (Xirau, 1993, 1997) of the second emancipation of Latin America (Dussel, 2009). As Dussel states, "Hidalgo, Bolívar, and San Martín ignited the thought of emancipation" (Dussel, 1985/1980, p. 11), but Simón Rodríguez realized that the first political independence did not mean the real emancipation of the *American Societies;* this is why he says "societies" and not "republics" in reference to the oppressed and disorganized Latin American peoples.

The philosophical presence (Xirau, 1993, 1997) of the second emancipation of Latin America (Dussel, 2009) that Rodríguez addressed is the situation that Latin Americans have been waiting for. As Dussel explains (2009), the first emancipation took place among the Spaniards and *criollos* who incorporated the oppressed of that colonial society (such as the case of Hidalgo and Bolívar). The second stage of that process was between conservatives and liberals in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, the national bourgeoisie, an exporter oligarchy, and twentieth-century imperialism ruled society. In the twenty-first century a second emancipation is supposed to happen, since the first political independence from Spain did not signify the emancipation of Latin America. The second and definitive independence of Latin America is a call that emphasizes that the first independence (between 1810 and 1830) was not sufficient to eliminate the situation of Latin American peoples as colonies of an empire. For instance,

for Rafael Correa (2013), president of Ecuador, the integration of all the Latin American nations as a single homeland would help bring about that second and definitive epistemological and economical independence from empires.

What is interesting is that the coloniality of power perspective (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b) shows how Rodríguez's call for a second emancipation has been delayed for five centuries until today. As Quijano states, it is not possible to understand modernity and capitalism without addressing colonialism.

For Rodríguez, the South American peoples were still living in a never-ending wait within a war that would determine their independence because he realized that Latin America was dependent on a nascent capitalism, as a previous section explains. Rodríguez pointed out how what Europeans took from their colonies was out of proportion with what the colonies received from Europe. There was not the same type of capitalism for Europe and for Latin America because colonialism had already created a pattern of power that in fact exceeded the relationship between Spain and their colonies. The new international pattern of power was capitalism at an international scale, as stated in the Theory of Dependency (Cardoso, 1968; Cardoso & Faletto, 1977; Gunder Frank, 1966; Amin, 1974; Sunkel, 1967, among others).

Rodríguez's statement that there were no Latin American republics because they were not founded, only formed (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842), is important in that it shows how the first emancipation did not mean independence in real terms since "*la independencia no deshizo la colonialidad; sencillamente transformó su contorno*"

(Quijano and Wallerstein, 1992a, p. 584, my translation; independence did not undo coloniality; the former simply transformed coloniality's contours).

Social Economy and Popular Education

As has been described, Simón Rodríguez tried to address throughout his *Sociedades Americanas (*American Societies*)* and *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* (Social Lights and Virtues) the issue that Latin American peoples had yet to form republics. In this effort he pointed out the existence of an unequal outcome as a result of the economic exchange between Europe and the newborn American nations. Rodríguez proposed the creation of a "social economy" on the one hand and a popular education on the other, both of which would have to work in conjunction to transform the *American Societies* into republics. For him the term "social economy" referred to the opposite of the commercial exchange between Europe and America at that time. This social economy was supposed to create local and concrete production systems in order to reactivate internal market systems instead of solely exploiting natural resources and raw materials. In this project, education was key since the educational systems should incorporate Indigenous peoples, Africans, and other *castas* and provide them knowledge and organization to produce local trade.

In the next quote Rodríguez points out a very interesting relationship between education and the materialistic aspect of resources:

> *TRATAR CON LAS COSAS/ es la primera parte de la Educación/ y TRATAR CON QUIEN LAS TIENE/ es la segunda/. Tómese, de paso, por máxima, segun*

> *este principio,/que mas aprende un niño, en un rato, labrando./ un Palito, que en dias enteros, conversando/ con un Maestro que le habla de abstracciones/ superiores a su experiencia.* (DEALING WITH THINGS/ is the first part of Education/ & DEALING WITH THOSE WHO HAVE THEM/ is the second/. According to this principle, take it as a maxim, in passing that a child learns more, in a short while, working with a little stick, than in entire days, conversing with a Teacher who speaks of abstractions superior to his or her experience (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, translation by Briggs, different font sizes, italics and capitalized original, p. 99).

He address that education has to deal with the issue of teaching or problematizing diverse kinds of objects to the student. Nonetheless, it does not end there. Education has to tackle the issue of who has and owns the things. For this educational project, it was necessary to incorporate the diverse types of *castas* and their knowledge to create local systems of production[38].

In addition to this, he created a taxonomy of classes in which he distinguished among the "influential class," "meager class," "the masses" and the existence of a political leader, who is a *"rey moderno ó constitucional que ve ultrajada su dignidad con la dependencia"* (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, p.118, my translation; a modern or

38 It is important to remember that Simón Rodríguez created candle factories to increase his chances of survival while he also tried to implement schools and, at the same time, he wrote *Sociedades Americanas* and *Luces y Virtudes Sociales*. To put in Western notions, Rodríguez believed in the dialectic process of the praxis of education where practice enriches theory and vice versa in a constant process.

constitutional king [a political leader] who feels outraged his/her dignity by dependence). For Rodríguez the "masses", the class at the bottom on this class taxonomy, are those that education and economy should incorporate. For him, conservative social actors who insisted on keeping the colonial practices were the ones who impeded real transformation of the Latin American societies.[39]

Part of the issue is that for Rodríguez education and economy were not isolated from knowledge production. The next quote of the 1842 edition of *Sociedades Americanas* describes in a noteworthy way the connection between social economy and popular education:

> *Empezando por la ECONOMÍA social, con una educación popular/*
> *reduciendo*
> *la DISCIPLINA propia de la economía a 2 principios/*
> *destinación a ejercicios útiles y*
> *aspiración fundada a la propiedad.*
> *Lo que no es GENERAL no es PÚBLICO/*
> *Lo que no es PÚBLICO no es SOCIAL.*
> (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, p. 46, my translation; It is necessary to start from social ECONOMY and POPULAR EDUCATION/converting economics into/two principles/the people should do productive activities and/the people's aspiration to

[39] See the causes of the dismissal of Simón Rodríguez as the Director of Public Instruction, Physics, Mathematics, and Sciences of Bolivia where Antonio José de Sucre was designated as president. See the letter to Simón Bolívar on September 4, 1826 in Chuquisaca, Bolivia.

own property. It is also necessary to understand that/What is not GENERAL is not PUBLIC/What is not PUBLIC is not SOCIAL.)

The last lines of the above quote are interesting in the sense that Rodríguez is saying that the economic and educative policies at that time should be social in order to truly be general. In other words, any policymaker should not boast of implementing general reforms if they do not incorporate the whole social corpus of the caste-based society at that time. For Rodríguez, if education attempts to be public, it should acknowledge that it was not possible to understand the development of science without understanding the slavery of the Indigenous and African populations of Latin America.[40] In addition to this epistemological awareness of the racial division of intellectual labor, Rodríguez stated that if educational systems in Latin America aimed to be public ones, they should incorporate Indigenous and African students into the schools. It is important to remember that Bolívar and Rodríguez traveled together in Perú and Bolivia. Bolívar issued many decrees in favor of the Indigenous peoples. He founded many schools there and Rodríguez was in charge of supervising them (Gutiérrez Plaza, 2011).

It could be said that Rodríguez experienced many problems in implementing his educational projects due to his attempt to relate education with economy. For instance, Simón Rodríguez even suggested that there should be no economical production without prior regulation, which resembled socialist economic proposals.

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[40] For instance, the says that "The American Doctors would not acknowledge that they know their science thanks to the Indians and blacks: because if the Doctors would have had to plough, sow, collect, bearing weight or producing what they have eaten, dressed and played with throughout their lives…they would not have known so much…they would be in the fields and they would be as brute as their slaves" (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, p. 256-257, my translation).

This is why Simón Rodríguez was talking about the need to create a social economy as a key aspect in transforming the *American Societies* into republics with *Lights and Social Virtues*, because he realized that what Europeans took from America was out of proportion to what they brought to America. In this sense, he stresses how social education is the foundation in order to have republics and not only groups of peoples: *"Hagan los directores de las Repúblicas lo que quieran, mientras no emprendan la obra de la educación social no verán los resultados que esperan"* (Rodríguez, 1990a/1828, p. 33, my translation; Policymakers of the Republics can do whatever they want, but if they do not take up the work of social education they will not see the results that they expect). In this sense, Rodríguez emphasized that policymakers cannot achieve the political, economical, and social transformation of the State if they do not first tackle the social character of education in those states.

Nevertheless, he points out that those policymakers are not willing to truly take into account the original population of the continent in the project of constructing republics. As he describes: *"...pero en lugar de consultar el genio de los americanos, consultan el de los europeos./Todo les viene embarcado"* (Rodríguez, 1990a/1828, my translation, p. 14; but instead of making use of the talent of the Americans, they [Latin American policymakers] consult the Europeans' talent./ Everything that they have has been imported.)

Simón Rodríguez's work is significant in the sense that he proposed building a social economy based on a popular education system that would include all sectors of a

caste-based society.[41] In this manner, Rodríguez's work is significant because it gives voice to the silenced thought of colonized peoples. The fact that he addressed colonial capitalism between Europe and Latin America in the nineteenth century stands out because his analysis proves that even though colonialism ended after the fight for independence, the coloniality of power (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b) and dependence have been until now constitutive elements of Latin America in the current pattern of power.

Simon Rodríguez, A Poet In The Field Of Education

Simón Rodríguez was a poet in the field of education. He created philosophical arguments in expressing his ideas that made his readers think that he was writing philosophical poems. Rodríguez proposed the kind of education that the colonized territories in Latin America needed in order to be independent republics. If Rodríguez's analysis in *Sociedades Americanas* and *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* is not a completely finished philosophical project on education according to the current philosophical canon, his work addressed the need for any type of education for colonized territories that suffered the international racial division of labor that fed nascent capitalism (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b).

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[41] For instance, see how Rodríguez enumerates in his *Sociedades Americanas* of 1842 some of the caste-based society's sectors of population who he thought should be incorporated in a popular education model. Some of the *castas* to be included were "*Huasos, Chinos y Bárbaros Gauchos, Cholos y Huachinangos Negros, Prietos y Gentiles Serranos, Calentanos, Indígenas Gente de Color y de Ruana Morenos, Mulatos y Zambos Blancos porfiados y Patas amarillas y una chusma de Cruzados Tercerones, Cuartetones, Quinterones, y Salto-atrás*" (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, p. 67).

Simón Rodríguez thought that the newborn Latin American nations were only societies since they were not founded as republics yet they were not independent. Therefore, he proposed an educational project that would help to gain independence for Latin America. This meant using education to convert the *American Societies* into republics with *Lights and Social Virtues*.

As a part of his effort, his proposal of explaining thoughts through the use of images and aphorisms that contrasted with the European canon enabled him to submit his epistemological proposal as well. If we accept the perspective that images are vehicles to construct knowledge (Xirau, 1968a, 1968b, 1971, 1995), then we can see that Rodríguez used images literally to draw out his ideas and also create conceptual arguments.

That is, Rodríguez changes the order of sentences and uses diverse typography of individual words (bold, italics) to make his writings seem more like poems than academic texts. He also draws out his concepts instead of only explaining them. For example, he uses the image of a building to point out the way Europeans were trying to renew their old system of thought since they did not have the figurative space to build a new one. Furthermore, Latin American peoples were trying to imitate Europeans even though Latin America was a whole empty land with plenty of space for new ideas and thoughts. As Rodríguez says, "America should not imitate slavishly but rather be ORIGINAL" (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, capitals original, p. 286). In this way, the use of images (Xirau, 1968a, 1968b, 1971, 1995) enables Rodríguez and the current analysis on decolonial thought to see some Latin American notions about originality as a philosophical need and to utilize epistemological means of constructing knowledge through images.

Rodríguez also made use of the image of Latin America as an entity living in an armistice or a cease-fire in the war that will determine its independence. It is relevant that those images (Xirau, 1968a, 1968b, 1971, 1995) led to an alternative philosophical presence (Xirau, 1993, 1997) in the second emancipation of Latin America (Dussel, 2009). That is, the use of images enables Rodríguez to evoke philosophical sites in alternative epistemological ways.

In addition to this, Simon Rodríguez addressed some important notions not only about capitalism, but most importantly about the relationship between colonialism and capitalism in Latin America. Rodríguez based some ideas on the process of the creation of capital where the flows of capital, exchange value, industry, and commerce create an unequal capitalism characterized for colonial exploitation. In this sense, it is interesting how Rodríguez's work depicted some notions of what would later be called coloniality of power (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b), since as the latter theoretical strand emphasizes, Latin America did not enter into the European capitalism. Instead, the profits from colonialism in Africa and Latin America were the constitutive force that made possible the existence of modernity and current capitalism.

If we accept the idea that a dependent and underdeveloped capitalism has existed (Dussel, 1985/1980), Rodríguez's work can be seen as an intriguing example of how people who suffer from dependent capitalism are the foundational basis that enables empires to exist.

As has been described, the educational project for Simón Rodríguez was part of his project to construct republics in Latin America. This is why he does not separate these

projects. Drawing from Rousseau's *Emile*, Rodríguez believed in the practical education of the schools for arts and trades (Ocampo López, 2007) and in the incorporation of the excluded *castas*. This formula would open the new nations to the originality needed to create real republics.

Rodríguez's educational project and his ideas on how to create Latin American republics seems to be an attempt to situate a Latin American educational project beyond the (ano-) horizon of European totality (with Europe as the center), (Dussel, 1985/1980). Rodríguez pointed out the absurdity of insisting on the colonialized educative and political projects for Latin America. As he states, the absurdity of "¡*Traer Ideas Coloniales a las Colonias!...*" (Bringing Colonial Ideas to the Colonies!...). was inadmissible (Rodríguez, 1990a/1828, p. 90). If during history Latin American peoples (in addition to African, Indigenous, Asian, Middle Eastern, etc.) have only been the empirical Others in the mainstream of history (Dussel, 1985/1980), Simón Rodríguez's work represents an important call for gaining philosophical independence in education in Latin America. If we lead the philosophical discussion into the exteriority of that discussion, we will reach the philosophical "…unobserved reality" (Dussel, 1998b, p. 260), that is, the face of the suffering of the colonized Other as the first philosophical moment. If we see that philosophical exteriority, we will see how Simón Rodríguez thought.

As Eduardo Galeano (1971) describes, Latin American countries have been only the empirical Others in mainstream history. Similarly, Rodríguez tries to assess the need to work toward Latin American exteriority (Dussel, 1985/1980, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c) as

a philosophical stance. This means working for the "ethical reason" that recognizes the Other not only as an empirical Other, but rather as emancipated epistemological social actor. Rodríguez states that every social sector of that racial society was an epistemological social actor. In other words, there was not a unique intelligent group of people in that society. *"¿Para qué Genio estableceremos Gobierno, si en América hay tantos Genios como razas? La pregunta pide que se declare el proyecto de esta obra*" (Rodríguez, 1990a 1828, my translation, p.15; For what intelligence will we establish Government, if in America there are as many perspectives as races? The question asks for a project to be declared to this effect.)

This means that the philosophy of education should take into account colonized peoples in ethical and epistemological terms. Rodríguez expresses this in a few lines that appear as a little poem in *Luces y Virtudes Sociales:* "*No es sueño ni delirio, sino filosofia . . . ; ni el lugar donde esto se haga será imajinario, como el que se figuró el Canciller Tomas Morus; su Utopia será, en realidad, la América"*. (Rodríguez, 1990b 1842, translated by Briggs, p. 200-201; It is neither dream nor delirium, but rather philosophy . . . ; nor is the place where it will be done imaginary like that place imagined by Chancellor Thomas More; his Utopia will be, in reality, America).

CONCLUSIONS

Bolivarian Thought On Education And The Contemporary Venezuelan Political And Educational Context.

Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez observed and criticized the colonialism and plundering that Latin American suffered from Spain. Both Bolívar and Rodríguez made

significant progress in the construction of a Philosophy of Liberation (Dussel, 1985/1980) for Latin America, since they aimed to create a distinctive philosophy from a distinctive point of departure. That is, the dominant philosophy has created its discourse from the privileged point of departure of the colonizer, whereas Bolívar and Rodríguez created their philosophy from the colonized.

Bolívar and his mentor created their works drawing from the situation of dependence and colonial capitalism that signaled the beginning of modernity as we know it today. In this sense, Simón Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez tried to form an ethical reasoning (Dussel, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c) as a point of departure to show the way in which colonialism in Latin America gave birth to capitalism and modernity (Dussel, 1985/1980, 2007; Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b, Quijano 2000a, 2000b; Mignolo 2000, 2001). Bolívar created the concept of Latin America as a unit that should fight for its independence. Before him, each group of people from México to *La Tierra del Fuego* saw themselves as only isolated colonized territories that suffered Spanish domination. In particular, Bolívar in the Jamaica Letter transformed colonialism as an issue for Latin America as a whole.

As has been described throughout this chapter, if we construct an ana-logos (analectics) (Dussel, 1985/1980) to construct philosophy, we will see that Latin Americans cannot use frameworks that have previously underestimated them. If we try to construct philosophy from the colonized peoples and we use ana-vehicles of knowledge underestimated by the philosophical canon, we can grasp certain notions that can enrich education. Bolívar and Rodríguez are examples of this philosophical effort since they

both created their philosophy not from the rationality of the colonizer, but rather from the suffering of the colonized.

The goal of this chapter has been to grasp Latin American philosophy and try to avoid Eurocentric approaches (Eurocentric notions) and Eurocentric entities (Eurocentric subjects), and vice versa. This is why Xirau's proposal of using images (Xirau, 1968a, 1968b, 1971, 1995) and the effort to seek spaces of alternative philosophical presence (1993, 1997) have enabled this decolonial philosophical effort. The thoughts of Bolívar and Rodríguez can help us understand the colonized Latin American peoples in their exteriority as distinct, and not only as different within the hegemonic totality (Dussel, 1985/1980).

If we look at the images in Bolívar's Jamaica Letter and the Angostura Address, we see how he projected an analectical stance where some notions of the philosophical perspective of the colonized emerge. As Xirau describes, the use of images and what the images suggest, as non-conventional ways to grasp philosophy, can enable us to understand and feel in different ways the eagerness for independence of the colonized people of Latin America. Given that images refer to objects instead of merely naming them (Xirau, 1968a, 1968b, 1971, 1995), they open an analectical epistemological path. In the case of Bolívar and Rodríguez, the images refer to the issue of living with an empire in Latin America. That is the philosophical ethos that made them use distinctive epistemological vehicles to express their alternatives about colonialism and independence. The use of images lead to an analectical epistemological path because the former make visible how analectics emerges not from the *ego cogito* ("I think"), where

oppressed peoples are only objects, and where the eagerness for independence is not validated as an epistemological element. Images open an epistemological path in breaking down the certitude of rationality. They make visible the ways in which rationality is a limited space through which philosophy can direct itself. They increase the awareness of how abstract philosophy can be since it is also made by suffering, joy, eagerness, etc.

In addition, as I have described, Simón Rodríguez aimed to use popular education as a means of transforming the *American Societies* into republics with *Lights and Social Virtues.* In this effort, Simón Rodríguez was a poet in the field of education, because he created philosophical arguments in drawing his ideas. The analectics method enables us to understand the way in which Rodríguez made use of images to offer a distinctive way of constructing knowledge, (Xirau, 1968a, 1968b, 1971, 1995) in his proposal to construct a new type of social economy along with popular education. Both aspects are foundational in his project of transforming Latin American isolated and dependent societies into independent republics. For Rodríguez, the divorcement of social economy and education was an illusion in the creation of real republics in Latin America. For him, the incorporation of Indigenous, Africans, and other *castas* into a popular educational model would remove the basis of the colonial society that resisted the transition into republics. In Rodríguez's project, the epistemological and materialistic incorporation of Indigenous, Africans, and poor peoples would give the originality of thought that would enable Latin America to avoid bringing colonial ideas to the colonies.

Contemporary Political and Educational Implications in Venezuela

After reviewing some of the key aspects that Bolívar and Rodríguez offer for a new educational project for Latin America, it is important to address the question as to whether the contemporary educational system is faithful to the decolonial insights of these foundational thinkers.

In the context of neoliberalism as the hegemonic force by which Latin American countries have organized their economic, social, and symbolic structures since 1980, the Bolivarian Revolution emerged as a hemispheric alternative. In terms of education, the Bolivarian government did the opposite of what the international financial organizations suggested to Latin American countries; in other words, the Bolivarian Revolution started providing social needs in a universal manner. The case of the universal right to education and food is especially interesting within the context of the hegemony of targeted social policy in Latin America (Fregoso Bailón, 2010 & 2011).

In this scenario, the Bolivarian Schools were born through decree number 179 of 15 September 1999 (Hernández Tedesco, 2012). What is really interesting is that the Bolivarian model of education revives Simón Bolívar not only as a historical character but also as a theoretical and philosophical basis to be taken into account. It is also surprising that the Venezuelan educational system did not focus on Aristotle, Pestalozzi, or other Western thinkers, since the majority of Latin American countries have rarely taken up their own authors as philosophers to develop national educational reforms.

Bolivarian Education started addressing the Jamaica Letter not only as historical reference in understanding the colonialism that Spain imposed upon Venezuela, but also

as a theoretical reference for the way the new Constituent Assembly and the new National Constitution of 1999 represented significant changes in the whole society that aimed to eliminate the dictatorship of the *Punto Fijo* regime (Graffe, 2005). In other words, Bolívar's legacy was interpreted in terms of the need for a break with recent Venezuelan history.

In this manner, since 1999, the Bolivarian Revolution took Simón Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez, among other thinkers, as theoretical bases from which they would develop Bolivarian Education. The National Bolivarian Curriculum of 2007 and the Organic Educational Act of 2009 established Bolivarian thought as the foundation for a kind of education that would go in an opposite direction from the neoliberal tendencies in Latin America.

In this sense, it is interesting that the Bolivarian educational system has officially incorporated issues such as colonialism, endogenous development versus dependent capitalism, socialism, the need to problematize private property, the connection between education and cooperativism, among other subjects, not only in Venezuela, but also in Latin America, as core curricular content. In this sense, analectics as a method enables us in this chapter to see how Bolivar's legacy on education frees up space for an alternative philosophical presence (Xirau, 1993) that recognizes the exteriority (Dussell, 1985/1980) of the suffering of Latin America as the first instance of philosophical thinking. Nevertheless, even though that philosophical thinking is emerging, the contradictions of the internal political aspects of the Bolivarian Revolution can obscure its philosophical importance.

In this sense, the question of the relationship between the contemporary Bolivarian educational system and the ideas of Bolívar and Rodríguez needs to be explored, along with the question of this contemporary system's relationship to the coloniality of power. I will address these issues in the next chapter, especially in regards to the curricular documents of present-day Bolivarian education.

Chapter Five: The Curricular Documents[42]

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I explore four curricular documents in light of the philosophy of liberation (Dussel, 1978, 1985/1980, 1990, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 2007 & 2009) and from the coloniality of power perspective (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b). It will be interesting to see how the philosophical legacy of Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez philosophical legacy informs the didactic character of the following documents: The National Bolivarian Curriculum, The Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem Curriculum, the document "Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem," and the sixth-grade textbook *Venezuela Y Su Gente, Ciencias Sociales Para Sexto Grado* (Venezuela and its People, Social Sciences for Sixth Grade).

These documents are important because they form a significant break with the trend of conservative education in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and they also represent a contestation to the dependent capitalism refashioned in the last four decades of neoliberalism in Latin America. In this sense, these curricular documents are an important step toward the decommercialization of key social needs (Esping-Andersen as cited in Boltvinik & Damían, 2004) such as education. These curricular proposals also lead to a construction of what is called social citizenship (Marshall, 2005; Gordon, 2001), which is based not on the free market but rather on the social right of education.

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[42] Portions of this chapter have been previously published in Fregoso Bailón, Raul, O. (2015). Sobre una trans-colonialidad para la construcción de la pedagogía crítica descolonial: El caso de la propuesta curricular de la educación Bolivariana. *Contextualizaciones Latinoamericanas*, 2 Año 7, número 13, julio-diciembre.

There are few curricular documents that address the need to teach (from elementary education onward) the elimination of capitalism and neoliberalism through problematizing social *institutions* such as private property, surplus value and the current capitalist model of development. The Bolivarian curricular documents call into question the capitalist model of production in order to encourage students to think of alternative types of property, social models of production, and non-capitalist companies. In this chapter I will show the way in which the aforementioned Bolivarian curricular proposal addresses these ideas.

First I would like to contextualize historically the scenario from which the four documents analyzed in this chapter emerged. The dictatorship of Juan Vicente Gómez in Venezuela from 1908 to 1935 coincided with the beginning of oil exploitation in the country. In terms of education, that oil boom process coincided with the release of the Code of Instruction of 1912, which entailed the construction of an educational system for the elite (Arteaga Mora, 2014).

After Juan Vicente Gómez, the next two presidents Eleazar López Contreras (1936-1942) and Medina Angarita (1942-1945) sought to establish an educational trend with two main characteristics: the creation of modernization from the incorporation of the masses and the definition of modernization as economic industrialization (Portillo & Bustamante, 1999). Marcos Pérez Jiménez came to power following a coup d'état and functioned as president of Venezuela from 1948 to 1958. As a consequence of this, Venezuela ratified a new constitution in 1953, which distanced itself from the notion of the *Estado Docente* / State as Educator (Arteaga Mora, 2014). This notion was part of

Bolívar's legacy to propose that the State should be the principal provider of education and should govern public and private educative institutions. After the end of Marcos Perez Jiménez's dictatorship, the *Punto Fijo* regime began. In 1961 Venezuela had a new constitution that changed the role of education in the State: from individual guarantees to social rights (Arteaga Mora, 2014). The new constitution of 1961 failed to create a new Educational Law, and the federal government did not release one until 1980 when Luis Herrera Campins was president. This Educational Law remained in force until the Bolivarian one of 2009.

It is important to mention that in the last part of the twentieth century, neoliberal perspectives on education prevailed in Venezuela and contradicted the thesis of the *Estado Docente* / State as Educator (Artega Mora, 2014). Privatization and a reduction in the State's role was the constant regarding education (Albornoz, 1986). In that scenario, beginning in 1999, the government of Hugo Chávez proposed a turning point against neoliberalism. His administration created a new national constitution, introduced a recall of the presidential mandate, paid a multi-million dollar debt to the International Monetary Fund, etc. In terms of education, Bolivarian education aimed to problematize dependent capitalism and neoliberalism in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and in Latin America, as the next section analyzes.

THE NATIONAL BOLIVARIAN CURRICULUM

The development of a national curriculum in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has been an historical struggle mostly regarding what role the State should play in the construction of a education system and what kind of peoples that curriculum

should form. In the twentieth century this debate began to quicken when Venezuela started its modernization through oil exploitation. In 1947 a new national constitution was launched. In this document, the concept of *El Estado Docente* (State as Educator) was established. The notion of State as Educator institutes the State as the principal provider of education that should control both private and public education.

In the forties and fifties, the pedagogical strand of *The New School* influenced curriculum at that time in Venezuela (Mora-García, 2013). Notions from authors such as Rousseau, Pestalozi, Decroly, Montessori, among others, were the theoretical basis of the official national curricula. The *Punto Fijo* regime started in the sixties and spread throughout the educational system the idea of Venezuela as a modern and democratic State. In 1961 Venezuela had a new constitution that conceived education as a social right (Arteaga Mora, 2014). In the seventies, Tyler's obsession with efficiency through educational objectives was the paradigm of modernity on education at that time. In the eighties the curriculum foundations were a mix of behaviorism, cognitivism and social psychology (Mora-García, 2013).

As can be seen, the development of the foundations of national curriculum in Venezuela was a constant importation of foreign traditions of thought. Those curricular proposals were created in Western nations for Western educational systems but with the pretense of universality. Venezuela took for granted that claim of universality and tried to implement those foreign curricular foundations in one of the Latin American colonies: Venezuela.

In this context, it is noteworthy how the National Bolivarian Curriculum in 2007

sought to create an educational program with the express goal of eliminating capitalism and colonialism. What is interesting is how this national curriculum addresses this approach unlike many other official curriculums in the world. The Bolivarian National Curriculum seeks to use Bolívar's and Rodríguez's thought as a philosophical basis. What follows is an analysis of this theoretical process.

The National Bolivarian Curriculum states: "*El desafío es transformar la escala de valores capitalistas por una centrada en el ser humano; trascender el colonialismo eurocéntrico capitalista*…" (National Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007, p. 18, translation mine; The challenge is to transform the capitalist scale of values into a different one focused on human beings; to transcend capitalist and Eurocentric colonialism). Bolivarian curricula takes up Bolívar's and Rodríguez's ideas of creating four main pillars of thought that give direction to the curriculum: 1) Learning to Create, 2) Learning to Live and Participate Together, 3) Learning to Value and 4) Learning to Reflect. In the next section I describe more in detail the connection that exists between Bolívar's and Rodríguez's legacy and the national official curriculum.

Simón Rodríguez and Bolívar in the National Bolivarian Curriculum

Simón Rodríguez in the National Bolivarian Curriculum.

The Bolivarian curriculum takes up Rodríguez's emphasis on the need for Latin American peoples to be original in their thought in order to create the first two main pillars: a) Learning to Create, and b) Learning to Live and Participate Together. For example, the Bolivarian curriculum resignifies Rodríguez's concern regarding Latin America's philosophical need to be original:

En relación con la ruptura con lo colonial, es preciso referir que a partir del legado de Rodríguez se inicia la búsqueda y la creación de paradigmas y enfoques del desarrollo propio, la invención de un vehículo para la verdadera libertad del pensamiento, cuyo producto sea una revolucionaria concepción de lo que debe ser el modelo educativo de las naciones americanas. El mismo Bolívar decía que su maestro enseñaba divirtiendo, con lo cual rompía con las rígidas costumbres educativas del colonialismo europeo; de allí que, en el siglo XXI, el SEB está concebido para romper las actuales estructuras del aprendizaje que persisten, en la fundamentación teórica de modelos exógenos… En cuanto al pensamiento de lo original y la invención, Rodríguez es el pionero de los enfoques de interpretación de la realidad y el desarrollo, que impulsan la creación de las identidades venezolana, latinoamericana y caribeña. Una de sus premisas es que se imitara la originalidad y más en una realidad tan novedosa como la americana. Por ello, se pretende desde lo educativo la creación de nuevas formas de aprendizaje, que rompan con el esquema repetitivo y trasmisor, provenientes del discurso clásico colonial. Desarrollar una revolución de pensamiento que acabe de una vez con la mentalidad colonial característica de la educación venezolana, latinoamericana y caribeña, y que se refleja en las prácticas pedagógicas vigentes. (National Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007, p. 40-41, my translation; In relation to the rupture with the colonial, it is necessary to refer to the fact that, since the beginnings of Rodríguez's legacy, the search for and

> creation of our own development paradigms and lenses has been initiated. This search entails the invention of a medium for true freedom of thought whose product is a revolutionary conception of how the educative model for the American nations must be. Even Bolívar used to say that his mentor taught by entertaining and amusing, by means of which he broke with the rigid customs of European colonialism; this is why in the twenty-first century, the Bolivarian Educative System aims to break with the current learning structures that still are based on exogenous models… Regarding the idea of originality and the importance of invention, Rodríguez is the pioneer of the interpretive and developmental perspectives that encourage the creation of Venezuelan, Latin American and Caribbean identities. One of his premises is the promotion of originality, especially in a land like America with so many innovative ideas. That is why the goal is to create new forms of learning that break with the repetitive and transmissive thinking of classic colonial discourse. The objective is to develop a revolution of thought that ends once and for all the colonial mentality typical of Venezuelan, Latin American and Caribbean education, and is reflected in present-day pedagogical practices).

This excerpt from the National Bolivarian Curriculum explains the extent to which Rodríguez's legacy is current, since theoretical independence has yet to be achieved by Latin American educational models. Regarding this point, the coloniality of power perspective (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b) is key to the deepening of Simón Rodríguez's philosophical proposal given that—although

the formal status of colony has ended for Latin American countries—the epistemological, economic, and racial hierarchies persist up to today.

As this national curriculum states, its goal is to build a revolutionary conception of the educational model for Latin American nations in an effort to break with twenty-first century colonialism. In other words, the educative aspiration is to transgress the philosophical totality (Dussel, 1985/1980) that creates a certitude in which epistemological hierarchies exist. On this point the Bolivarian educational proposal tries at least to address the urgent need to open the Latin American educational systems to an alternative philosophical presence (Xirau, 1993, 1997). This proposal seeks this latter ethos and destiny by means of rescuing Rodríguez's educative proposal instead of copying exogenous models.

Bolívar in the National Bolivarian Curriculum.

The Bolivarian National Curriculum constructs the theoretical pillar of "Learning to Value" from Simón Bolívar. Specifically, the Bolivarian curriculum utilizes Bolívar's images from *Moral y Luces* and the Angostura Address to link education with social citizenship, social rights, and popular education in the current international context of privatization as *the* paradigm. The national curriculum states:

> *Simón Bolívar constituye la mejor evidencia del éxito de la Educación Robinsoniana...Se puede apreciar en los diversos escritos y documentos del Libertador, que en sus reflexiones y análisis sobre Venezuela y la Gran Colombia, existía una estrecha y determinante relación entre la educación y la ciudadanía.... En el Discurso de Angostura (1819) cuando Bolívar habla de*

> *Moral y Luces e instrucción pública, está colocando importancia suprema en el impacto y los efectos transformadores de la educación popular. Esta posición le otorga una alta jerarquía a la educación de niños, niñas, jóvenes, indígenas, afrodescendientes, desposeídos y pobres, bajo la dirección y control directo del Gobierno, abriendo las puertas a las tesis del Estado Educador y de la educación como derecho social.* (National Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007, my translation, p. 10; Simón Bolívar constitutes the best evidence of Robinsonian Education's success…It is possible to see in many of the Liberator's documents to what extent there was a close connection between education and citizenship within his reflections on Venezuela and the Great Colombia. …In the Angostura Address (1819), when Bolívar talks about Moral and Lights and public instruction, he is emphasizing the immense importance of popular education. This position gives great importance to the education of boys, girls, youth, indigenous peoples, African-descended peoples, and the lower class, under the direct management and control of the State in order to create an Educator State and to affirm education as a social right).

It is noteworthy that Bolívar's thought from Morality and Lights and his Angostura Address are used to bridge the gap between education and social citizenship through popular education. That connection is raised in the national curriculum as an ongoing task for Latin American nation-states, which remains from the time of Bolívar's fight for independence.

As the curriculum describes, Bolivarian education aims to revive Bolívar's

thought regarding establishing the state's control in order to create an *Estado Docente* / Educator State that incorporates Indigenous people, African-descended people, and the lower class by means of repositioning education as a social right. This is an interesting proposal amidst an international conservative consensus that seeks to individualize and privatize every human activity. Thus, Chossudovsky (2003) explains that what exists is not globalization, but rather a globalization of poverty, since globalization mostly entails the presence of conservative and organized agreements among those who benefit from the current type of capitalism.

When the Bolivarian curriculum states that it is necessary to incorporate Indigenous people, Afro-descendent people, and the lower class, it is not just creating public policy. It also brings attention those who have been neglected by the philosophical totality (Dussel, 1985/1980, 1996) and shows that Latin American thinkers should be used as a theoretical basis to incorporate those who have been considered the empirical Others (Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant, poor peoples etc.) For instance, for Fanon (2004/1961), philosophical ethnocentrism is even reproduced by the colonized peoples:

> We realize that nothing has been left to chance and that the total result looked for by colonial domination was indeed to convince the natives that colonialism came to lighten their darkness. The effect consciously sought by colonialism was to drive into the native's head the idea that if the settlers were to leave, they would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality (Fanon, 2004/1961, p. 211).

It is also possible that ethical reason could be allowed to emerge (Dussel, 1998a,

1998b, 1998c) because philosophy is open towards those who have been placed within the system but only as empirical others. In this sense the Bolivarian curriculum at least opens education towards what Dussel (1996, 1998b & 1998c) names the philosophical exteriority. In this vein, Simón Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez are not part of the curricular proposal as empirical others, but rather they are active producers of philosophy.

It is important to state that the Bolivarian National Curriculum does not address other moments of oppression evident in the current Venezuelan context. For instance, it does not address the way that political corruption undermines any kind of social revolution (Evans, 2015) and how internal conflicts exist in every social process. In this way, in order to have a revolution, it is also necessary to have an internal revolution. This curriculum emphasizes that the moment of domination appears in the surplus value created in the exploitation of Latin America in the international context of current capitalism. Nonetheless, this curriculum should also recognize that there are many other spaces where oppressions emerge such as the many instances of what De Lissovoy calls violation (2012a, 2012b). "Violation" can be understood as the moment in which surplus value is realized in the profit of injury itself and not merely in the economic process that Marx described.

The National Bolivarian Curriculum as a Curriculum for Independence: Endogenous Development and Other Types of Property.

The Bolivarian National Curricula describes in a more detailed manner the implications of the resignification of Simón Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez in how the curricula is structured. One of the most important pedagogical concepts that the

Bolivarian curriculum has constructed is the notion of Republican Pedagogy. This term refers to how Bolívar's and Rodríguez's legacy implies a concrete pedagogy as a means of transforming the dependent and colonial Latin American peoples into independent republics.

In order to create that type of Republican Pedagogy, Bolivarian education proposes the concept of endogenous development in education. According to Bolivarian curricula, that concept means that schools, families, and communities are the principal vehicles of socialization in a social process of horizontal development. In this sense schools are a key element in a process that aims to construct a non-capitalist economy—in other words, endogenous development instead of basing the economy on foreign investment, as established in liberal economies. This is why schools are supposed to work as an axis of social and economic integration where people encounter community centers in which cooperatives and other popular organizations attempt to form an alternative kind of society (Torres Perdomo, 2000; Serna, 2008; Chirinos Zárraga, E. & Ortiz de Aponte, 2000; Fuenmayor de González & Doris Salas de Molina, 2008).

What is interesting is that the Bolivarian schools are designed to be centers of community activities and community participation. These schools are supposed to construct an alternative type of economy by means of understanding that there are many kinds of property and not only the private kind. This would lead to a construction of a different model of production that will help to achieve food sovereignty and social rights with an integrationist vision of Latin America (National Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007). For instance, the next quote from the section "Pillars of the Bolivarian Education" from

the national curriculum explains the role that understanding other types of property plays in the creation of a new type of education and society:

> *Estos pilares, (Aprender a crear, Aprender a Vivir y Paricipar Juntos, Aprender a Valorar y Aprender a reflexionar) se asumen como elementos flexibles que orientan los componentes de las áreas de aprendizaje y los ejes integradores, facilitando las experiencias de aprendizaje inter y transdisciplinarias que permitan formar al nuevo republicano y la nueva republicana, a través del desarrollo de procesos de aprendizajes en colectivo, donde éstos y éstas se relacionan con su contexto histórico-cultural, transformándose en ciudadanos y ciudadanas humanistas, creativos, y ambientalistas; con actitudes, aptitudes y valores acerca del hacer científico, desde una perspectiva social; conscientes de la diversidad y la pluriculturalidad del país; con amor a la Patria; orgullosos de sus costumbres y acervos culturales y conocedor de la nueva geometría territorial y su dinámica; así como de la importancia del desarrollo económico del país desde las diferentes formas de propiedad, como medio para garantizar la seguridad y soberanía alimentaria; y con visión internacionalista e integracionista, desde una perspectiva latinoamericana, caribeña y universal (National Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007, my translation, p. 20).*

These pillars of thought (Learning to Create, Learning to Live and Participate Together, Learning to Value, and Learning to Reflect) are taken as flexible elements that guide the creation of learning areas and didactic hubs, facilitating inter- and intra- learning experiences. This process aims to help

> educate the new republican men and women through the development of collective learning processes in which students relate what they learn to its historic and cultural context. In this manner, they transform themselves into humanistic, creative and environmentalist citizens who possess scientific attitudes, aptitudes, and values from a social perspective. The aim is for these students to be aware of the country's diversity and pluriculturality; while having love for the homeland, and pride for their customs and cultural heritage. These students should know the new territorial geometry and its dynamic as well as the importance of the country's economic development, drawing from diverse types of property as a means of guaranteeing food governance and sovereignty; and obtaining their knowledge through an integrationist, Latin American, Caribbean, and universal perspective (National Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007, my translation, p. 20).

The fact that the Bolivarian curriculum addresses understanding different kinds of property aside from private property is noteworthy, because the educational model that tackles private property is perhaps problematizing the key social institutions of capitalist society, as Engels, (2010/1884) and Marx, (2010/1867) describe. The Bolivarian curriculum proposes thinking of distinct forms of property since the Bolivarian Revolution aims to construct a distinct production model where social property (Chávez, 2011) helps create an endogenous development that is not dependent on an external capitalist economy sustained in private property (Chávez, 2011). Hugo Chávez understood private property in the following manner: "*La palabra privada viene de allí:*

'privar a otros de'. Propiedad privada es aquella que le pertenece a alguien que priva a los demás" (Chávez, 2011, my translation, p. 44; The word *private* itself suggests what it entails: "de*priv*ing others". Private property is that which is owned by those who deprive others).

In this manner, the Bolivarian National Curriculum redefines Bolívar's and Rodríguez's thoughts in building a curriculum to transform the dependent and colonial Latin American peoples into independent republics. For the Bolivarian Revolution's perspective that means using Bolívar's and Rodríguez's ideas to create a distinctive theoretical basis for a curriculum that includes education into a non-capitalist model of development called endogenous development, in which other forms of property are proposed.

Hubs of Curricular Integration and Learning Areas.

The theoretical perspective built on Bolívar's and Rodríguez's thought and the goal to construct an alternative social model of development are rooted in the curricular *Ejes integradores* (hubs of curricular integration) and in areas of learning. All areas of learning are integrated into the hubs of curricular integration, which are transversal didactic guidelines meant to organize the learning areas to be taught. See graph No. 8 on the next page.

The *Ejes integradores* (the hubs of curricular integration) are 1) Environment and Comprehensive Health, 2) Interculturality, 3) Information and Communication Technology and 4) *Trabajo Liberador* (Liberating Work). The latter primarily addresses the goal of integrating curriculum in order to transform schools into a key element of

endogenous development.

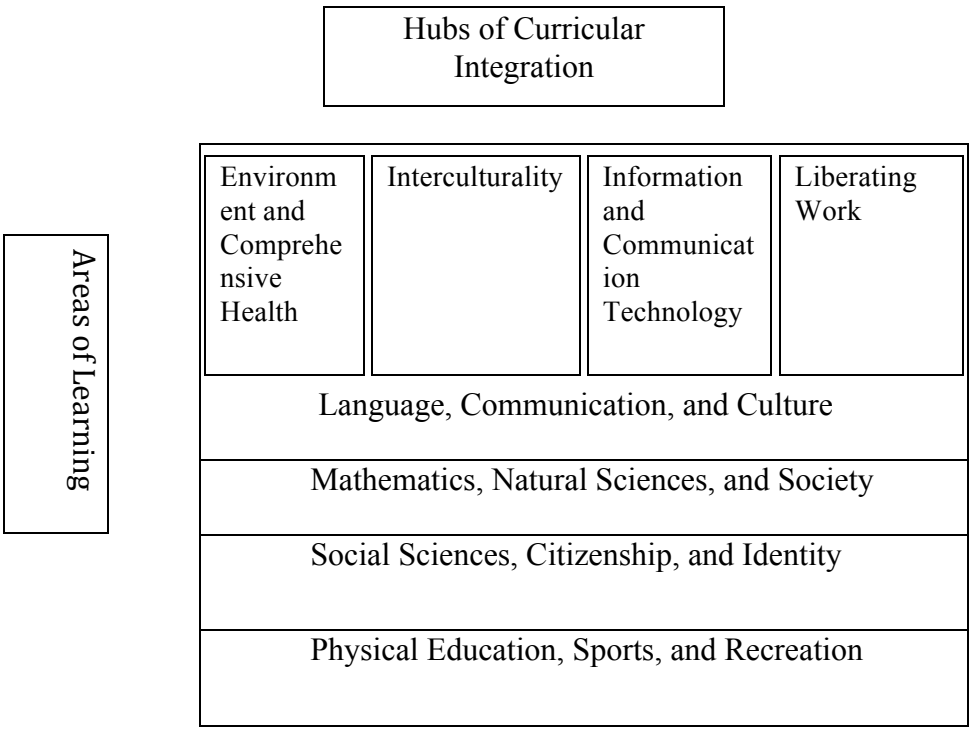

Figure 7 prepared by the author, based on the Curriculum of the Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem

The hub "Liberating Work" seeks to articulate areas of learning into a curricular effort based on praxis of what the students learn in the sense of converting schools into spaces where collective learning is built through experiences of the historic and social context in which the students live. As the Bolivarian curriculum states, this kind of connection between work and education should transform capitalist subjectivity: *En este contexto, debe existir una unión indisoluble entre la educación y el trabajo, como una*

dimensión plenamente humana que los lleve a reflejar desde la praxis el modelo de sociedad productiva y solidaria…" (National Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007, p. 58, my translation; In this context, there should be an indissoluble union between education and work, for the purpose of fulfilling a full human dimension that leads people to reflect within praxis on the model of a society which is productive and whose members reside in solidarity).

The Liberating Work hub's emphasis on creating praxis for learning areas is translated into a proposal for implementing the following types of social learning projects: 1) *Proyecto Educativo Integral Comunitario* (Comprehensive Community Education Project) (PEIC), and 2) the *Proyecto de Aprendizaje* (Learning Project) (PA). While the first one is more about connecting schools as institutions with the communities in which they are inserted, the second project is about promoting endogenous development from classrooms. Both aim to encourage teachers, students, parents, and cooperatives to work collaboratively in addressing local problems by means of understanding other forms of property and social models of development.

The way in which the National Bolivarian Curriculum describes what can be understood as endogenous development is:

> *…Desarrollo Endógeno: tiene como fin la participación de manera integrada de todos los actores en el proceso educativo (maestros, maestras, estudiantes y familia), quienes a partir de la realidad implementan diferentes acciones para su transformación; es decir, impulsan a las y los jóvenes desde su propio contexto, tomando en cuenta los aspectos socioambientales de la comunidad, de tal forma*

que contribuyan con el desarrollo endógeno local, regional, nacional, latinoamericano, caribeño y mundial (National Bolivarian Curriculum 2007, p. 66, my translation;…Endogenous development seeks to create the integrated participation of all local actors in the educational process (teachers, students, and families), who implement distinctive practices from their own realities in order to transform that reality; that is, they educate their students based on their own context, taking the socio-environmental aspects from their communities into account in such a way that they contribute to local, national, Latin American, Caribbean, and international endogenous development).

The national curriculum describes in greater detail how endogenous development implies that teaching is a political act. What is significant is that a national official curriculum explicitly acknowledges the political nature of teaching:

Como consecuencia de lo anterior, se asume la educación como un proceso social que se crea en colectivo y emerge de las raíces de cada pueblo; como un acto político y expresión de los procesos sociales, culturales y educativos, cuya finalidad es fomentar el pensamiento liberador, creador y transformador; así como la reflexión crítica, la participación ciudadana…. Asimismo, esta concepción del proceso educativo implica el desarrollo de las virtudes y principios sociales, y la asunción de una ciudadanía responsable de sus derechos y deberes públicos; todo ello para lograr el desarrollo endógeno de los pueblos (National Bolivarian Curriculum 2007, p. 48, my translation; In this sense, education is understood as a social process created in a collective manner, which

> emerges from the roots of every community; it is understood as a political act and as an expression of social, cultural, and educative processes. Thus, the goal is to promote liberating, creative, and transformative thinking as well as critical reflection, citizen engagement…Likewise, this notion of the educative process implies the development of virtues and social principles as well as citizens' acceptance of their responsibilities concerning their public rights and duties; the combination of these efforts achieves the endogenous development of communities).

Even though this curricular goal has had many effects, from the construction of social rights regarding education (Fregoso Bailón, 2010, 2011) to disorganization in educational administration, it is interesting that this curricular proposal has connected students with their local problems in an active manner. For instance, through his fieldwork in Bolivarian schools at an elementary and higher education level, Bjerck (2012) describes that the teachers were aware of the importance of addressing social constructivist ways of teaching. In one of the interviews, a teacher expressed that before the implementation of Bolivarian education, all the courses were taught with the same emphasis, but today the emphasis is on teaching more courses related to social studies. As the teacher said, "*Pienso que hay poco espacio para las asignaturas técnicas. Damos más horas de clase, pero menos enseñanza técnic*a"(Bjerck, 2012, pp. 83-84; I think that there is little room for technical education. We teach more courses, but few of them are on technical education). Considering that the curricular reforms in many countries concerning increased technical education were related to the implementation of the

neoliberal model (Torres Santomé, 2007), it is interesting how in the case of Bolivarian education social studies have more prevalence, as this teacher said. Nevertheless, the construction of any kind of alternative model of development, such as the endogenous one, would need a solid technical education component.

Some of these experiences indicate that if endogenous development has not been achieved as the national curricula aims, at least the political nature of teaching has been addressed (Sansevero de Suárez, Lúquez de Camacho & Fernández de Celayarán Otilia, 2006; Camacaro de Suárez, 2008). According to Muhr (2010, 2013). Bolivarian education has been a continental project that has helped many Latin American countries[43] dismantle the paradigm of competitive education and offer the idea of cooperative education as a new standpoint in accordance with the goal of promoting endogenous development. In this sense, endogenous development is not only another model of development which contrasts with that of neoliberal developmentalist, but it is also an educational model that aims to implement Simón Rodríguez's legacy in terms of connecting social units of production, local problems, and schools (Girardi, 2006). In the state of Maracaibo, Venezuela, 315 students and 39 teachers from six educational institutions[44] from the educational project *Misión Sucre*[45] participated in a statistical and qualitative study that sought to discover students' opinions regarding the connection

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43 Antigua and Barbuda, the Plurinational Republic of Bolivia, the Republic of Cuba, the Commonwealth of Dominica, the Republic of Ecuador, the Republic of Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

44 Liceo Rafael María Baralt, Ince Marrón, Liceo Francisco José Duarte, Unidad Educativa Manuel Segundo Sánchez, Colegio Cosme González, Unidad Educativa Raúl Leoni and Instituto Universitario de Tecnología de Maracaibo.

45 The Misión Sucre is an official educational program that provides higher education as a social right to students of all ages.

between the notion of endogenous development and the educative project of *Misión Sucre*. Findings show that *Misión Sucre* as an official educational program incorporated high school graduates who previously had not been admitted to university in the state of Maracaibo, Venezuela. The findings also bring up that 62% of students belong to a stratum of relative poverty[46] and 12% of those students belong to the stratum of extreme poverty. 60.3% of students think that this educational effort helps link their local problems with the model of endogenous development (Peña Ruiz, Parra Olivares, & Méndez de Souki, 2009).

Another hub of curricular integration is "Environment and Comprehensive Health". As the National Bolivarian Curriculum explains, this hub consists of the following:

> *Es necesario que todas y todos desarrollen hábitos de higiene, alimentación, actividades físicas, recreativas y relaciones personales armoniosas; todo ello, para fomentar estilos de vida saludables. En este contexto, el ambiente es asumido como proceso holístico que integra al ser humano desde su salud física, mental y espiritual…. En este sentido, este eje fomenta la valoración del ambiente como un todo dinámico en el cual se encuentra inmerso y toma decisions conducentes al aprovechamiento racional, responsable, presente y futuro del patrimonio socio-cultural y los recursos naturales… en el mejoramiento de la calidad de vida como base del bienestar social* (National Bolivarian Curriculum,

[46] For more regarding these levels of poverty, see the Graffar technique in agencies CORPOZULIA-FUNDACREDESA, 2001 in Peña Ruiz, Parra Olivares, & Méndez de Souki (2009).

> 2007, my translation, p. 57; It is necessary for every student to develop good hygiene practices, a balanced diet, physical and recreational sporting activities; all of which aims to promote healthy lifestyles. In this context, the environment is understood as a holistic process that integrates the student-human being with his or her physical, mental, and spiritual health…In this sense, this hub of curricular integration promotes the understanding of the environment as a dynamic whole in which the student is embedded, and in which he/she makes decisions towards the rationale and responsible use of present and future socio-cultural heritage and natural resources…for the improvement of the quality of life as a basis for social welfare).

Delmont (2010) describes how this emphasis on environment and health has been incorporated in 350 schools within 23 municipalities in the state of Mérida, Venezuela, in the sense that the use of laboratories, additional bibliography, and the participation of students in community brigades have allowed teaching science in the context of specific environments instead of only depositing that learning into the students' minds. That has also helped to teach environment and science to all students and not only to those who are more advanced in those fields. The experience of ecological elementary schools is also another interesting case in which environmental curricula is taught with a social-based perspective in which students, teachers, parents, and other communities members participate. In the elementary school *Unidad Educativa Santa Rosa* in the municipality of *Libertador*, Mérida, Venezuela, forty-seven students and five teachers along with community members created an inventory of the region's fauna and flora, set up a school

nursery, and planted a school vegetable garden (González Dávila, Molina Lobo, Coromoto, 2009). Another interesting finding is how Plonczak (2008) determined that for some teachers in elementary schools in Caracas, science was not an objective or a neutral field of knowledge to be taught to elementary school children. This outcome is an important sign of the process in which teachers have started to dismantle the technocratic and instrumental notion of teaching science. It is also interesting how the other hubs of curricular integration – "Interculturality" and "Information and Communication Technology" – intend to make use of the information available through the internet and other technology in order to organize the learning areas through Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez's idea of incorporating the groups of people rejected by colonial society. This is why interculturality is not a learning area but a hub of curricular integration – because all the learning areas should be organized through this idea of racial and cultural integration.

THE CURRICULUM OF THE BOLIVARIAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SUBSYSTEM

The first curriculum for elementary education in Venezuela in the twenty-century was issued in 1911 by the minister José Gil Fortoul, in which it is possible to see the positivist perspective (the emphasis on science, freedom of thought, among other concepts) as the theoretical basis of that national curricula (Mora-García, 2004).

The Minister of Education implemented preschool and elementary education curriculums from 1969 to 1971. Some other curriculums that detailed the organization of courses and content at elementary level were released between 1969 and 1973. By 1975

many critics of those curriculums emerged. They especially criticized repetitive, memory-based learning, the disconnection between students' lives and reality, a lack of stimulating creativity, and inadequate distribution of content and assignment loads (Ramírez, 2011). In this context, the Basic Education Subsystem (or elementary education level) was created by decree number 646 on June 13, 1980. Additionally, the new Educational Law of 1980 was released three months later.

In the eighties the dominant standpoint from which the national curricula was created had a technocratic bias. For instance, the education minister at that time, Hernández Carabaño, was distinguished by his developmental perspective angle and his emphasis on "human resources" training or having the slogan "Education as a National Company" (Ramirez, 2011, p. 524).

For instance, in the eighties, an important innovation was the implementation of *Unidad Generadora de Aprendizaje* (UGA) (Generative Learning Unit), which was an integrated axis of learning areas for elementary education. Nevertheless, the Generative Learning Unit sought to guide teachers in achieving specific goals for behavioral changes among students, and was heavily influenced by the behavioral perspective (Sulbarán, 2011). What is interesting is that this connection between the efficiency-developmentalist perspective and the elementary education curriculum did not bring efficiency. As Sulbarán describes (2011), the implementation of behaviorist-based Generative Learning Units subjected teachers to a heavy rigidity and formalism that generated, in turn, the loss of significance in learning.

In this context, the Curriculum of the Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem

represented a huge change in the sense that it attempted to be a curriculum against capitalism founded in Latin American thought. It is important to mention that the National Bolivarian Curriculum is the national official curriculum from which The Curriculum of the Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem derives. Nevertheless both are separate documents published in 2007 by the Ministry of the Popular Power of Education of Venezuela.

Didactic Principles of the Curriculum of the Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem

This national curriculum draws on the issue of the theoretical importance of Bolívar's Angostura Address (1819), especially the concept of Morality and Lights, and Simón Rodríguez's ideas on the need to transform colonized societies into free republics. The Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem's Curriculum uses Bolívar's and Rodríguez's concepts with the express goal of incorporating the term *popular*[47] into educational systems of the twenty-first century. According to this curricular proposal, *popular* means, in the Bolivarian perspective, the need to understand education as social right that the State should provide, in particular to children, Indigenous, Afro-descendent, dispossessed, and poor students. To this end, the Bolivarian curricular documents propose Bolívar's idea of constructing an Educator State (*Estado Docente ó Educador*), which means that the state is the principal provider of education in a nation.

[47] The term popular in Spanish refers to a political majority, mass movements, and political policies aimed at appealing to large bodies of constituents. See Damiani (2009).

Trying to translate that theoretical approach in terms of national educative guidelines, the Bolivarian educative model constructs a national curriculum that "*Muestra y difunde las diversas formas de organización comunitaria y el desarrollo endógeno, como modelo económico-social"* (National Bolivarian Curriculum, my translation, p. 15; Shows and disseminates the diverse forms of community organizations and endogenous development, as an economic and social model).

In terms of didactics, this national curriculum proposes organizing the content in four didactic hubs in relation to four learning areas for the elementary level. As I described in the previous section, the didactic hubs are 1) Environment and Comprehensive Health 2) Interculturality, 3) Technology and Education (TIC's) and 4) Liberating Work. The four learning areas for elementary education are: 1) Language, Communication, and Culture, 2) Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Society, 3) Social Sciences, Citizenship, and Identity, and 4) Physical Education, Sports, and Recreation.

The national curriculum for elementary education explains in detail what each one of the learning areas pursues. In the area of Language, Communication, and Culture it is noteworthy that language is a social cultural construction built from ancestral cosmovisions of peoples and communities and the historical and geo-historic consciousness of a multiethnic and pluricultural Venezuela and Latin America. The curricular content uses the term *saberes* (ways of knowing) and not only the concept of "knowledge" as a way to include other perspectives such as those of the Afrodescendant and Indigenous peoples. On the other hand, the learning area of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Society seeks to teach students certain notions regarding the soil, water, and

air of students' communities in order to problematize the social conditions in which the students live. In addition to this, this learning area raises the need to study the most frequent diseases in Venezuela and how traditional medicine is an important way of dealing with those diseases.

For its part, the learning area of Social Sciences, Citizenship, and Identity most directly utilizes the Bolivarian philosophical perspective on education. One of the most important components is identity as a social and political formation. The national curriculum establishes teaching the importance of the Indigenous resistance and the fight against African slavery. Specifically, this curriculum addresses the teaching of *Afrovenezonalidad* / Afro-Venezuelan identity (National Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007, p.75). For example, one of the contents of this learning area is the creation of the *Día Nacional de los Pueblos y Comunidades Indígenas y Afrodescendientes* (National Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007, p. 37, my translation; National Day of the Indigenous and Afrodescendant Peoples and Communities) that students commemorate beginning in first grade. This is a way to challenge the *criollo* historical memory of Venezuela and Latin America. The philosophical totality that Dussel describes (1985/1980) is also racial in the sense that the social contract has been a racial one (Mills, 1997) in which racial identity is not part of the historical memory of many Latin American countries.

For instance, the national Bolivarian curriculum at the elementary level for third grade has as "geo-historical knowledge" component (p. 61), which regards teaching: "*Pueblos originarios: ubicación de las principales comunidades. Pueblos indígenas de la actualidad* (The Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem, 2007, p. 62, my translation;

Indigenous peoples: the current geographic location of the primary communities). Likewise, this content aims to introduce students to: "*Comprensión de la importancia de los aportes de las comunidades indígenas, africanas, europea y Latinoamericana en la formación del Venezolano, de la sociedad y del sentir Venezolano* (The Bolivarian Elementary School subsystem's Curriculum, 2007, p. 62, my translation; Understanding the importance of the Indigenous, African, European, and Latin American contributions in shaping what being Venezuelan means, what Venezuelan society is, and in the deep feelings of the Venezuelan people).

In this manner, the official curriculum attempts to teach students of the geo-historical character of their identity as Venezuelans. In doing so, this effort disrupts the unipolar world-perspective, especially in terms of identity.

Another relevant aspect is how the learning area of Social Sciences, Citizenship, and Identity raises the need to teach elementary-level children the current importance of Bolivarian thought. That means the study of some of Bolívar's documents such as the Jamaica Letter in light of today's Venezuelan society. For instance some educational contents teach the role of the oil industry in the world and the definition of endogenous development beginning in the fourth grade.

What has been problematic for many sectors of the Venezuelan population is the politicization and indoctrination of schools, especially within the content for history courses (Carvajal, 2006b). Some other problems are related to the lack of raises for teachers. At the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year, 77% of the teachers from the municipality of Sucre missed work because of they attended an assembly organized to

demand the payment of salary arrears. This shows that although the Bolivarian project has opened the discussion on education to what Dussel calls the exteriority of Latin America (1985/1980, 1996, 2009), and although the Bolivarian revolution has addressed how the legacy of the coloniality of power (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a and 2000b) still recreates reality in Latin America, the Bolivarian education system still needs to look at the everyday Venezuelan exteriority where the victims of every dominant order live (Dussel, 1998b). In other words, its significance has been huge for Latin America as a whole, but it has been problematic in national terms. Furthermore, Bolivarian education represents a significant effort to continue what Dussel (2007) explains to be the first emancipation of Latin America aimed at contesting the colonial totality initiated in the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, the Bolivarian educative project is problematic in terms of teaching students how even within the national revolutionaries the logic of violation (De Lissovoy, 2012a & 2012b) emerges since power does not distinguish between opponents and supporters of the revolution.

Democracy, Endogenous Development, and Curriculum

In the sixth grade, the Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem speaks of how elementary schools should teach the connection between issues such as the limits of the current model of production, democracy, and endogenous development; and the presence of Indigenous and African-descended peoples. For instance, some of the contents for the learning area of Social Sciences, Citizenship, and Identity are:

- *...Estudio, interpretación, análisis y establecimiento de opiniones sobre la democracia representative 1959-1999: el Pacto de Punto Fijo como maxima*

representación de la democracia representativa.

- *Estudio, interpretación, análisis y establecimiento de opiniones sobre la democracia participative: 1999 hasta nuestros días.*
- *Caracterización y reflexion sobre los factores sociales, politicos y económicos que debilitan el modelo tradicional de producción*
- *Estudio y análisis de las relaciones de Venezuela en el mundo: organismos internacionales a los que pertenece Venezuela, OEA, UNESCO, OPEP, ONY, ALBA y MERCOSUR*
- *…Análisis de la importancia del papel de las comunidades en el ejercicio de la governabilidad nacional y el poder electoral*
- *Análisis de las principals actividades económicas de Venezuela: modelos de producción social, de desarollo endógeno: unidades de producción social, núcleos de desarrollo agro-industrial, fundos zamoranos, entre otros.*
- *Discusión sobre la importancia del desarrollo endógeno como medio de desarrollo de la colectividad.*
- *Estudio sobre las fuentes de energía alternativa, eólica y solar.*
- *Determinación de la importancia estratégica de la industria gasífera y mineral para el desarrollo mineral*
- *Valoración y reflexión sobre la vigencia del pensamiento bolivariano*
- *Estudio de las comunidades y pueblos indígenas en el contexto actual. Leyes indígenas. LOPCI. (Ley Orgánica para pueblos y comunidades indígenas).*

- *…Estudio de la Constitución de 1999: el pueblo como principal ejecutor de la Soberanía Nacional. La figura de referendum consultivo y revocatorio.*
- *Aplicación de manifestaciones culturales: Afrodescendientes, Europeas e Indígenas,* [*(Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem's Curriculum, 2007, p. 94-95).*
- Study, interpretation, analysis, and the expression of opinions about representative democracy 1959-1999: Punto Fijo pact as the maximum representation of representative democracy.
- Study, interpretation, analysis, and the expression of opinions about participative democracy: from 1999 to the present.
- Characterization of and reflection about the social, political, and economic factors that undermine the traditional model of production
- Study and analysis of the international relations of Venezuela: international organizations to which Venezuela belongs: OAS, UNESCO, OPEC, UN, ALBA, and MERCOSUR.
- …Analysis of the importance of the roles played by communities in the use of national governance and electoral power.
- Analysis of the principal economic activities of Venezuela: models of social production and endogenous development: units of social production, nucleus of agro-industrial development, *zamorano* funds, among others.
- Discussion regarding the importance of endogenous development as a means of

improving collective development.

- Study regarding alternative energy sources such as wind and solar energy.
- Reflection on the strategic importance of the gas and mineral industry for mineral development.
- Appreciation of and reflection on the current impact of Bolivarian thought.
- Analysis of the current situation of Indigenous communities and peoples. Indigenous Laws. LOPCI (Organic Law for Indigenous Communities and Peoples).
- Study on the Constitution of 1999: the people as the principal executors of the national sovereignty. Analysis of the consultative and recall referendum.
- The implementation of cultural manifestations from Afro-descendant, Europeans, and Indigenous peoples (Bolivarian Elementary School subsystem's Curriculum, my translation, 2007, p. 94-95).

It is noteworthy the way in which this national official curriculum explicitly problematizes the conventional notion of democracy. The document indicates that children should be taught the difference between representative and participative democracy. In this way, the official curricula tries to teach children the need to develop what Carr (2008, 2011, 2012; Carr & Becker, 2013, Carr & Abdi, 2013) describes as a deeper understanding of what democracy is and the key role of education in this effort.

Additionally, it is possible to see how the described contents aim to teach students that there was a "traditional model of production" that is not useful today. As a result, the educative systems teach the children that there are other "…models of social production

and endogenous development: units of social production, nucleus of agro-industrial development, *zamorano* funds, among others". As has been described in previous sections, the models of production that Bolivarian Education tries to problematize are the capitalist and neoliberal models in Latin America. These models of production did not satisfy the social needs of colonized Latin American peoples, but rather those models only provide focalized aid in the context of a State that advocates for foreign investment (Townsend & Gordon, 2004; Gordon, 2001).

This is important because some of the contents directly address the relationship between endogenous development and alternative social production units, along with discussing the idea of creating popular power (Millán Arteaga, 2008). As is stated in the Curriculum of the Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem, in the fourth grade the educational goal is to discuss with students how they can be part of a more sovereign, cooperative, and unified society. As this learning area emphasizes, it is important: "*Estudio de la participación de los grupos sociales en la conformación de la Venezuela colonizada"* (National Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007, p. 74, my translation; [to study] social groups' participation in the construction of a colonized Venezuela).

Collectivizing Knowledge

It is noteworthy that an official Latin American national curriculum for elementary education explicitly addresses the idea that a nation of this region is a colonized one. In this scenario, this curriculum offers a distinctive epistemological path to teach that Latin America is still, in the twenty-first century, a colonized territory. To tackle this ontological situation of being a colony, the Bolivarian Elementary School

Subsystem Curriculum (2007) tries to propose an emancipatory educational model by means of collectivizing knowledge:

> *...propuesta pedagógica innovadora que se origina de las ideas educativas y emancipadoras de Simón Rodríguez, Francisco de Miranda, Simón Bolívar, Ezequiel Zamora y de otros pensadores y otras pensadoras de Latinoamérica, el Caribe y el mundo; ideas con las cuales se promueve un cambio en el proceso de aprendizaje de los niños y las niñas, que supone una nueva forma de interpretar los saberes individuales para colectivizarlos desde la escuela y fortalecer el pleno ejercicio de la ciudadanía, en defensa de la soberanía venezolana, latinoamericana y caribeña* (Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem's Curriculum, 2007, p. 12, my translation; an innovative pedagogical proposal originating from the educative and emancipatory ideas of Simón Rodríguez, Francisco de Miranda, Simón Bolívar, Ezequiel Zamora, and other thinkers from Latin America, the Caribbean, and the world; the goal is to use those ideas to bring about a change in the children's learning process; that change aims to be a new way to interpret individual knowledge in order to collectivize it within schools, and, in this manner, strengthen the full exercise of citizenship in defense of Venezuelan, Latin American, and Caribbean sovereignty).

This quote demonstrates the fact that the previous bullet points within the curriculum describe that a connection between education and emancipation does not come from resistance to the official curriculum. Presently, the union between education and politics is the official curriculum. Whereas some trends in education reproduce the

ideologies that capitalism requires (De Lissovoy, 2008), in contrast, the Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem Curriculum challenges the hegemony of neutrality within curricula. This implies having a different accountability for what the students learn, which in this case is the collectivization of knowledge as Bolívar, Simón Rodríguez, Miranda, and others proposed. In this manner, collectivizing knowledge can be understood as teaching from the suffering of Latin America as a land of survivors and emphasizing the fact that what students learn is connected with the local, national and continental geo-politics of knowledge. By collectivizing learning and positioning Latin American thinkers as its foundation, this curriculum demonstrates that Latin American authors can be the philosophical centrality, and not the empirical Others, of the philosophical system (Dussel, 1980/1995).

For instance, Morales (2001) describes how 154 seventh-grade students took part in a two-year study in an elementary school in Lagunillas, Mérida, Venezuela. This study shows the impact of the proposal of collectivizing knowledge pertaining to the field of geography. The students were organized into groups that chose geography-related topics that needed to be researched. They read texts, including online sources, watched videos, visited libraries, and gave presentations of their group projects. According to Morales (2001), some of the core findings suggest that collaborative learning leads students towards a more in-depth understanding of geography. In didactic terms, it is significant how the students worked in a collective manner to address the local dimension of their learning. In terms of constructing an epistemology of liberation, that didactic achievement means that the efficacy of collaborative student learning reveals the

vindication of the collectivization of epistemologies as an educational need, which breaks with the individualization of learning.

THE DOCUMENT "EDUCATION PLANNING IN THE BASIC EDUCATION SUBSYSTEM"

The document "Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem" is didactic material for the elementary level that the Ministry of Popular Power for Education of Venezuela released in 2012 as an attempt to give more specific guidelines to teachers regarding the implementation of the Comprehensive Communitary Education Project (PEIC) and the Learning Projects (PA) in their schools. This document has four sections. One of them is devoted to describing the educational foundations of didactic planning for elementary education and the other three describe how teachers can implement the Comprehensive Communitary Education Project (PEIC) and the Learning Projects (PA).

In the twenty-first century, Bolivarian education aimed to revive the connection between what teachers impart and students' social problems. In this scenario, the curricular document *La Planificación Educativa En El Subsistema De Educación Básica* (Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem) explains the theoretical basis and application of didactic strategies to link classrooms with local communities. In the next lines I analyze the document "Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem", especially in light of the proposal to link the classroom with local social problems: the Comprehensive Communitary Education Project (PEIC) and the Learning Projects (PA).

Proyecto Educativo Integral Comunitario **(PEIC), (Comprehensive Communitary Education Project)**

The Comprehensive Communitary Education Project (PEIC) is a didactic project that aims to connect what students learn with their local communities and problems. It is a planning guide for teachers to plan their lessons drawing from the knowledge that emerges from the connection among schools, communities, and the organizations in which they are embedded. The "National Bolivarian Curriculum" and the "Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem Curriculum" address the PEIC, but the didactic document "Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem" explains to teachers in more detail how to implement the PEIC and the PA.

Philosophical Basis

The document "Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem" explains the philosophical basis from which the Bolivarian education builds the Comprehensive Communitary Education Project (PEIC). For instance the PEIC's foundation is the Bolivarian axiological basis that outlines the Bolivarian values of independence, freedom, cooperativism, and values of mutual cooperation (Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 1999). In terms of education, the Comprehensive Communitary Education Project aims to build "…*formación para la independencia*…" ("…training for independence…") (Art.3, The Organic Law on Education, 2009, my translation).

Likewise, the curricular document "Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem" determines that the epistemological dimension of the Comprehensive Communitary Education Project (PEIC) is the *diálogo de saberes* (dialogue among ways of knowing). *Diálogo de saberes* means that knowledge is a social product made by

community members who participate in the construction of ways of knowing. This process enables them to fulfill their role in the geo-historical construction of reality.

In this sense, the concept of schooling and community shares connections with ancestral and contemporary forms of connecting knowledge. For this perspective what is significant is knowledge that is socially relevant to people's local settings. In this manner the epistemology that sustains the Comprehensive Communitary Education Project draws from the action-research perspective (Rojas Soriano, 2002), which has a long tradition in Latin America.

In the same vein, the proposal of the Comprehensive Communitary Education Projects (PEIC) regards dialogic interactions between students, teachers, and other local organizations to discuss possible solutions to social problems in the classroom. The following quote from the document "Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem" explains what should be understood as socially relevant knowledge in the Comprehensive Communitary Education Project:

> *El proceso pedagógico de acuerdo a la LOE 2009 (artículo 14) se fundamenta en el desarrollo de una didáctica centrada en los procesos que tiene como eje la investigación, la creatividad y la innovación; en la interacción dialógica en la que se constituye el conocimiento donde los que participan se reconocen como sujeto social… La integralidad implica considerar la realidad social como totalidad histórica concreta, revela la existencia de saberes y conocimientos integrados, desde una metodología interdisciplinaria y transdisciplinaria.*

> *El sujeto social o estudiante desarrolla sus potencialidades en el marco de un proceso curricular, donde los referentes teórico-prácticos mantienen pertinencia sociocultural. Los aprendizajes contribuyen al desarrollo de la persona como individualidad y como parte de un colectivo social (Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem, 2012, my translation, p. 5;* The pedagogical process, according to the Organic Law of Education (Art. 14), is based on the development of didactics that focus on processes that consider research, creativity, and innovation to be the axis of the educative process; this type of didactics is also based on dialogic interaction in which knowledge is constructed and where the people who participate recognize one another as social subjects….Comprehensiveness [in the Comprehensive Communitary Education Projects] implies understanding social reality as a concrete historic totality; comprehensiveness means the existence of integral ways of knowing in applying an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary methodology. The social subject, or student, develops his/her potential in the framework of a curricular process in which the theoretical-practical foundations keep their socio-cultural relevance. What he or she learns contributes to the development of the person as individual and as a part of a social collective entity.)

Commoditization of education is an issue not only in the Western hemisphere, but also in Europe, Eastern Europe, and other regions of the planet (Torres Santomé, 2007). Additionally, the logic of "achievement" (De Lissovoy, 2008, p. 79) has been proclaimed as the only possible way to evaluate education. In light of this context, the educative

proposal contained in the document "Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem" is significant because this addresses using Comprehensive Communitary Education Projects to evaluate learning in terms of its historic and sociocultural relevance. This means that teachers can use the official document "Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem" to justify why their work in their classroom is not constrained to neoliberal educational accountability, such as the OCDE's standards, since Venezuela is officially allowing teachers to connect their work to the historic and sociocultural relevance of the communities.

As this curricular document explains, the students have to construct their knowledge through the epistemological ethos of the connection between what is social and what is schooled. For this educational proposal:

> *Lo comunitario y lo escolar como expresión de la totalidad concreta de lo social, mantienen relaciones dinámicas de teoría y práctica, saber y hacer, lo ancestral y diverso que, en la realidad venezolana, se suscriben en su abordaje al enfoque geohistórico* (Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem, my translation, p. 4; Communal elements and scholarship are expressions of a concrete totality of social reality; these aspects are understood as ones that have dynamic relationships in theory and practice, knowing and doing, regarding that which is ancestral and that which is diverse. In the Venezuelan reality, they subscribe to the geo-historical approach.)

As this quote reveals, communal and schooled knowledge is thought of as an entire concrete geo-historical totality to be addressed. This curricular design is significant

in itself because it dares to propose the opposite of that which is hegemonic in the Western educative world. The Comprehensive Communitary Education Project's emphasis on considering the social relevance of education has officially led teachers to connect their lessons with local and national issues. Regarding the geo-historic curricular goal, Rivero (2008) describes how having a certain amount of educational experience was helpful for teachers of geography in the Bolivarian elementary school "Rosa Inés", located in the Barinas Municipality of the Venezuelan state of Barinas. Rivero conducted a study with five elementary teachers, one per grade level, from first to fifth grade. One of the second grade teachers, Doris, who has a bachelor's degree in Spanish and Literature, is a teacher who is also in charge of the *Programa Alimentario Escolar* (PAE) (School Meals Program) in that elementary school. Another teacher is Bertha, who instructs fifth graders and has two years of experience. Rivero (2008) describes what happened one day in that classroom. The subject for the class was "oil".

> *Comenzó su clase preguntándole a sus estudiantes acerca del mencionado oro negro, comentaron algunas de sus carácterísticas. Luego definió el petróleo dictándoles, preguntándoles acerca de su importancia y ellos respondieron –que de el se sacaban muchísimas cosas que utilizaron como: la pintura, el anime, gasolina, plastic y otros….Luego les dictó los cambios que se dieron a raíz de la explotación del petróleo y del hacinamiento que hubo en las ciudades por la movilización de las personas en busca de mejores condiciones de vida, también hizo referencia que los cambios sociales, politicos y culturales* (Rivero, 2008, p. 83, my translation; She started the class by asking the students about the well

known black gold. They commented on some of the characteristics of oil. After that, she gave them the definition of oil, asking the students about the oil's importance. They responded that from oil it is possible to make many things that they used in their school, such as paint, Styrofoam, gasoline, plastics, and other products…. After that, she explained some changes that oil exploitation created, such as overcrowded cities due to the migration of many peoples to the cities in an attempt to improve their lives. She also mentioned the social, political, and cultural changes caused by the oil exploitation.)

First, it is important to note the presence of two elements. One is the School Meals Program, which represents a new attempt to universalize certain social services for the population - not as welfare, but rather as social rights. This program works counter to what the majority of Latin American countries have done in the last four decades of neoliberalism (Fregoso Bailón, 2010). Bertha, the fifth-grade teacher, addresses the subject of the oil exploitation, but in terms of what that phenomenon has meant in capitalist-peripheral nations, such as Venezuela. The exploitation-exportation of raw material to meet demand from the international market results in the next paradox for Latin America: raw materials are extracted from rural areas, but the extraction of that wealth (raw materials) translates into poverty for the populations of those rural areas. As a result, those peoples have to migrate to cities. In turn, the capital cities of many Latin American countries become overcrowded spaces, lacking sufficient food, water, housing, education, etc. These individuals encounter the poverty from which they were attempting to escape. That creates a distinctive geo-historical reality not only in terms of space, but

also in terms of resources. This is why Education Planning in the Basic Subsystem recognizes the need to teach that which is social, that which is scholarly, and that which is communal as a geo-historical totality that has affected Venezuela and Latin America. Nevertheless, Rivero (2008) also describes how fifth-grade teacher Bertha also reproduces some traditional rote learning while she teaches interesting subjects such as oil exploitation. This use of traditional rote memorization demonstrates that, although Bolivarian education emphasizes the communal relevance of learning, this goal has not eliminated all traditional perspectives that teachers have held during the last decades.

As the curricular document "Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem" explains, schools should have to provide community members with the methodology necessary to create collective projects, in order to understand and deal with their historical context. The curricular document "Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem" explains, "*Desde esta perspectiva, la escuela es el espacio de integración de todos los ámbitos del quehacer social. Fomenta la participación protagónica y democrática desde el trabajo integrado entre familias, escuela y comunidad*." (Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem, 2012, my translation, p.4; From this perspective, schools are the space of integration in all fields of social activity. Schools encourage leading and democratic social participation from the integrative work among families, school and community. In this connection, schools would support participatory democracy through education (Carr, 2011; Carr & Becker, 2013) within the students' locations.

As can been seen, the fact that schools as explicitly political structures are called to participate in the political construction of students' communities is significant. This political epistemological stance is noteworthy in philosophical discussion, especially because it challenges the idea that schools are neutral settings separated from society. This perspective is clearly based on the Marxist idea of praxis on education that principally Freire (1970) made known, where students and community members are co-owners and have co-responsibility for the knowledge they are creating when resolving their local and national problems.

Main Steps in the Process to Create the Comprehensive Communitar Education Projects.

The curricular document "Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem" aims to put families, schools and local organizations to work together. The result of that work should be content to be taught in schools. To this end, this document suggests implementing the following steps in the process of constructing the Comprehensive Communitary Education Projects.

First, it is necessary to create a general assembly of the educational community, as well as a local community map, in order to identify the ways in which schools can work with other local social organizations. It is important to mention that this model of involving schools and local organizations comes from the action-research that resulted from the revolutionary experiences in many Latin American countries (Rojas, 2002), in which teachers and principals invite other local organizations, such as cooperatives and

neighborhood organizations, to discuss the regional problems in a local assembly. In this way, the purpose is to develop a community outreach curriculum.

One of the first steps in elaborating a "participatory comprehensive analysis" (Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem, 2012, p. 7) is for the educational community to determine what needs to be solved. Part of this community diagnostic is formulating a database of the students' social characteristics such as their families' background, parents' level of income, and the community's cultural manifestations. Likewise, for this database it is important to identify children's multiple learning styles and their physical and mental health conditions.

In the "participatory comprehensive analysis", it is also important to outline the school's historical background, so that it is possible to understand the social environment in which the school is embedded—especially in terms of acknowledging the de facto powers surrounding the school.

Main steps in the process to create the Comprehensive Communitary Education Projects.
a) Create a "general assembly of the educational community"
b) Elaborate a "participatory comprehensive diagnostic"
c) Construct the "local problem-posing situation"
d) Develop an "Action Plan" to tackle that social problem.

Figure 8 adapted by the author, based on the document "Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem".

Once the "participatory comprehensive diagnostic" is done, the next step is to create the "problem-posing situation" (Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem, 2012, p. 8), which entails establishing a hierarchy through which the

educational community's problems can be tackled. At this point, students, teachers, and other local social actors demarcate some broad action lines where progress needs to be made in accordance with the school's necessities.

After that, the next step is to develop an "Action Plan" (Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem, 2012, p. 9) for meeting goals approved by a community assembly on education. The Action Plan's scope is key in determining what means are going to be implemented in an effort to tackle each one of the "problem-posing situations". In this manner "…the triad families-educational institutions-communities" (Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem, 2012, p. 9) relate their needs according to the "participatory comprehensive analysis".

All the steps described above show the ways in which the Comprehensive Communitary Education Projects attempt to incorporate local educative community members in the kind of knowledge that is relevant in terms of schools' and communities' social needs. Besides the many challenges of trying to implement this type of social-base curriculum (disorganization, internal rift, inefficiency, etc.), it is interesting that the official national curriculum (in this case the Bolivarian one in Venezuela) directly addresses the need to implement such a curriculum in schools that seek to move social forces within local neighborhoods and communities. This means raising a new kind of accountability for schools, such as the extent to which schools respond to local social necessities, counters an international context of neoliberal educational reforms that seek the opposite: to promote educational accountability in a way that ties schools with transnational interests.

As this curricular document states, its goal is to translate into curricula Simón Rodríguez's idea of reality as a comprehensive historical totality where schools constitute the settings from which to transform students into citizens of nations that aspire to be independent republics. This is what this curricular document calls, in Simón Rodríguez's perspective, *integralidad* ("completeness") (Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem, 2012).

Learning Projects (PA)

The curricular national document "Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem" (2012) also describes the role of the *El Proyecto de Aprendizaje (PA)* (Learning Projects) in the curricular planning of the National Bolivarian Curriculum (2007). Learning Projects are based on the participatory and transformative research perspective. Their purpose is to take the Comprehensive Communitary Education Projects' sources to plan the classrooms' lesson in an intra- or interdisciplinary manner. From that first conscientization (Freire, 1970), teachers should draw from the ways in which social organizations, along with schoolwork, solve local problems, in order to plan their classes on a daily basis. Just like the Comprehensive Communitary Education Projects, the Learning Projects are based on the participatory and transformative research perspective, with the difference being that the Learning Projects utilize the sources of the Comprehensive Community Education Projects to plan the classroom lessons in an intra- or interdisciplinary manner. Since teachers and students participate in the Comprehensive Communitary Education Projects, the former are supposed to know the social needs of the educative community. From that local conscientization (Freire, 1970), teachers should

have used those local social necessities and problems as sources to plan their daily classroom tasks in relation to the hubs of curricular integration and the four areas of learning.

This means that schools' accountability is not tied with transnational guidelines such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) supported by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Instead of that, since teachers have participated in the Comprehensive Communitary Education Projects, they are aware of students' social needs, of which they can make use to give social relevance to their teaching. This causes a lack of standardization that in turn results in disorganization, but this is also an opportunity to liberate teachers' classroom projects from privatizing forces. This curricular effort can even cause confusion for teachers since they are accustomed to being bureaucrats that only apply technocratic top-down educational curricular guidelines. In this manner, understanding knowledge to be worked within classrooms through dialogic interactions also problematizes the role of teachers as intellectuals (Giroux, 1990).

The Textbook *Venezuela and Its People, Social Sciences for Sixth Grade*

The context of the development of textbooks since the second part of the twentieth century reveals a process of intellectual creation toward a decolonization of education in Venezuela. It is interesting how the need to decolonize the textbooks for elementary education in Venezuela was already brought up before the coloniality of power perspective (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a, 2000b). Pilar Quintero (1985) addressed how negative cultural labels were associated with what is

Venezuelan or Latin American, whereas what could be considered as positive was associated with Western nations. She studied the way in which the teaching of history from 1944 to 1992 created a Venezuelan and Latin American identity that internalized domination and processes of neocolonialism. Quintero (2003) analyzed ninety-six elementary education textbooks in the areas of history and the social sciences from three periods of time: 1944–1968, 1969–1984, and 1985–1997. She found that those textbooks reproduced an evolutionist bias on culture, stigmatizing Latin American countries as nations in inferior stages of evolution or development. Merlach (1980) brings up how official history in Venezuela underpins racism against blacks. For their part, Calzadilla and Salazar (2000) describe how blacks are absent in textbooks at the elementary level because slavery and the presence of blacks are portrayed in those textbooks in terms of history and not their current contribution to Venezuelan society. In terms of gender, within textbooks for elementary education in the 1970s and 1980s, women as social actors are overshadowed. During the periods of 2006–2007 and 2007–2008, although textbooks recognized the role of women, they did so mostly in biological terms and not in a manner that recognized the social and cultural relevance of women in society (Delgado, Santana & Graterol, 2008).

In the context of Bolivarian education, the textbook collection *Colección Bicentenario* (which forms part of the textbook *Venezuela and Its People, Social Sciences for Sixth Grade*) was the first conjunction of textbooks edited and published by the Bolivarian government. This textbook covers the areas of (a) Social Sciences, Identity, and Citizenship; (b) Language, Communication, and Culture; and (c) Mathematics,

Natural Sciences, and Society. Before the Bicentenario Collection, these textbooks were elaborated and published by private companies.[48] In the next lines I describe some of the key concepts that Bolivarian education addresses through this textbook at the elementary level.

The Notion of Dependent Capitalism in a Textbook

Since the concept of capitalism as a problematic issue is difficult to find in an official educational document, the fact that a textbook for elementary education teaches the idea of dependent capitalism is significant. The following quote from the textbook *Venezuela and Its People, Social Sciences for Sixth Grade* (Bracho & León de Hurtado, 2013) is revealing because it shows the educational perspective that the Bolivarian curriculum uses:

> *¿Economía dependiente e industrias?*
>
> *El capitalismo es un sistema económico basado en la propiedad privada de los medios de producción (tierras agrícolas, fábricas, maquinarias, transportes, comercios, etc.) y en la economía de mercado (producir mercancías para comercializarlas).*
>
> *En el mundo actual hay un grupo de países con economía capitalista muy desarrollada. Y otros países con una economía capitalista dependiente, es decir, tienen relaciones de dependencia con países donde hay un capitalismo más desarrollado y con poderío e influencia*...(…)…

[48] For instance, *Enciclopedia Actualidad Escolar 5° grado*. Caracas: Editorial Actualidad Escolar 2000, *Enciclopedia Actualidad Escolar 6° grado*. Caracas: Editorial Actualidad Escolar 2000. And *Enciclopedia Girasol 5. Quinto Grado*. Caracas: Grupo Editorial Girasol (Arteaga Mora, 2014).

Venezuela y los otros países de Latinoamérica tienen una economía capitalista dependiente. Un país es capitalista dependiente cuando su economía está condicionada por intereses del desarrollo económico de países que tienen un capitalismo más fuerte. Debido a esto, los países con capitalismo dependiente han mantenido economías débiles y subdesarrolladas…[…]…

El proceso urbano-industrial de Venezuela ha estado marcado por la dependencia económica: a) Sus industrias utilizan maquinarias y tecnologías importadas; b) Buena parte de las industrias de bienes de consumo dependen de la inversión de capitales financieros extranjeros; c) Muchas industrias utilizan materia prima importada. Esta dependencia económica ha sido factor fundamental de las distorsiones espaciales: migraciones internas hacia áreas industriales y el deterioro ambiental y la pobreza que padecemos.

Antes se creía que sólo mediante la industrialización se lograba el desarrollo económico de un país, porque así lo alcanzaron desde el siglo XIX los países capitalistas. Pero este criterio ha cambiado porque el capitalismo industrial ha empobrecido a muchos pueblos y ha deteriorado tanto el ambiente que hasta peligra la vida terrestre…[…]…

El proyecto de "Desarrollo endógeno" y la propiedad social que hoy se adelanta en Venezuela, es una forma de desarrollo humano, equitativo y sustentable, como alternativa para abandonar el capitalismo dependiente y lograr la independencia económica. (Bracho & León, 2013, p. 46, my translation; Dependent economy and industries? Capitalism in an economic system based on private property as the

means of production (agricultural lands, factories, machinery, transportation, commerce, etc.) and on the market economy (through which merchandise is produced in order to be marketed).

In today's world, there is a group of countries with a developed capitalist economy. In addition to this, there are some other countries with a dependent capitalist economy; that is, countries whose dependence is linked to developed capitalist countries that have power and influence….[…]…

Venezuela and other countries from Latin America have a dependent capitalist economy. A dependent capitalist country is a country conditioned by the economic interests of other countries that have stronger capitalism. As a result of this, the countries with dependent capitalism have continued to have weak and underdeveloped economies...(…)…

The urban-industrial process of Venezuela has been determined by economic dependency: a) its industries use imported machinery and technology; b) many of the industries that produce goods for consumption depend on the investment of financial foreign capitals; c) many industries use imported raw materials. This economic dependency has been a fundamental factor of internal immigration towards industrial areas, environmental destruction, and the poverty that all of us suffer.

In the past it was believed that economic development was only achieved by means of industrialization, since capitalist countries achieved their development in that manner. Nevertheless, this belief has changed because industrial capitalism

> has impoverished many peoples and industrial capitalism has deteriorated to such an extent that the environment and even life in the world is at risk…(…)…
>
> The project of "endogenous development" and social property that Venezuela has led is a type of equitable and sustainable human development that offers an alternative that will allow us to abandon dependent capitalism and achieve economic independence.

This quoted textbook page reflects many of the subjects that Bolivarian education addresses from the beginnings of elementary education. For example, this book teaches elementary students about the existence of an economic order called capitalism and systems such as capitalism exists because there is something called private property. This book also teaches that there are some important factors such as means of production, which are tied to private property and the market economy. So far it is unique not only that these concepts (capitalism, private property, means of production, market economy) are taught at the elementary level, but also that connections are made among those concepts.

In addition to the concept of the existence of capitalism, students are exposed to the notion that capitalism is not the same for everybody. As the previous quote explains, there is a dependent capitalist economy in some countries because this fact is necessary for the existence of developed capitalist nations. That is, elementary-level students are supposed to learn that the development of some nations is tied to the underdevelopment, poverty, and dependency of other countries.

In this sense, the textbook underscores the problem of dependency, which can be traced back to Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez. If for Bolívar the principle problem of Latin America was colonial dependency, for Rodríguez Latin America did not achieve its independence even after the type of wars that Bolívar and others had waged toward that end. After all, for Rodríguez Latin America did not achieve its independency "but rather an armistice in the War that will decide it" (Rodríguez, 1990a/1828, p. 19, translation by Briggs).

This explanation that the wealth created by capitalism makes it necessary for Latin America and other territories to be plundered draws from the theory of dependency (Cardoso, 1968; Faletto, 1986; Gunder Frank, 1966; Amin, 1974; among others). Dependency theory emphasizes that the underdevelopment and poverty of Latin America enable the wealth of nations that benefit from capitalism within the modern world-system that Wallerstein describes (1979). In this sense, the coloniality of power perspective (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a, 2000b) could also be useful in understanding this textbook since the former points out how colonialism gave birth to capitalism.

This quote also addresses how this textbook incorporates some other recent discussions related to environmental damage, the notion of endogenous development, and socialism. In many of the textbooks' sections, the idea of endogenous development is addressed as an alternative model of development in opposition to the kind of model exported to Latin America that proposed that the most unequal areas of the world would achieve development just as the wealthiest countries did via industrialization and a free

market. This textbook addresses how Latin America is not capable of using that model of development since the latter (industrialization, foreign investment, etc.) actually feeds off of the non-development of Latin America.[49] The textbook for elementary education points out this paradox or vicious circle in Latin America. By doing this, Bolivarian education challenges the episteme by ethics, since the former draws from the permanent economic circle that captures the suffering of Latin America in constant underdevelopment. As Dussel explains (1998b, 1998c, 2007), the philosophy of liberation has not as its points of departure the rational episteme, but rather comes from the attempt to provide an open philosophy regarding the exteriority of colonized peoples—from colonized México to colonized Malvinas or Togo. In this sense ethics disrupt episteme.

Surplus Value and the Sixth Grade Textbook

It is also revealing that this textbook addresses the concept of surplus value at an elementary level: "*Los obreros y las obreras que producen una mercancía, añaden al valor de la materia prima sobre la cual trabajan, el valor de su propio mantenimiento, es decir, su salario reproduce el capital invertido y beneficia la ganancia del dueño de la fábrica: esto se llama plusvalía*" (Bracho & León, 2013, p. 41, my translation; The workers who produce merchandise add value to the raw materials with which they work, the value necessary to create those raw materials; that is, their salary reproduces the invested capital and enables the profit of the factory owner: this is what is called surplus

[49] Latin American intellectuals have described this process since the seventies, but this discussion was dismissed after neoliberalism started in Latin America in 1973. See chapter five, "The Contemporary Structure of Plunder," in Eduardo Galeano's *Open Veins of Latin America* (1971).

value). As it is known, one of the key concepts of Marx's *Capital* is surplus value since the latter is the principal source from which capital originates; in fact, surplus value is the ethos of capital. Any educative proposal that aims to counter capitalism has to tackle the concept of surplus value.

The textbook continues addressing, in terms of didactics, how there can exist other types of property (not only the private kind) and other types of companies (not only the capitalist ones):

> *Este diagrama muestra el funcionamiento de una empresa capitalista, como las que han funcionado en Venezuela. Analiza el diagrama y piensa: ¿Qué le agregarías o le quitarías, si quisieras que las ganancias brindaran mayor beneficio a sus trabajadores y a la sociedad venezolana (empresa social) y no sólo a sus dueños? . . . Ustedes realizarán colectivamente en el aula, un diagrama de este tipo que muestre el funcionamiento de una empresa de propiedad social, como las que se están creando ahora en Venezuela. Haz los cambios necesarios para adecuar este diagrama a la nueva realidad de la Venezuela del siglo XXI.* (Bracho & León, 2013, p. 41, my translation; The diagram below shows the operations of a capitalist company, such as those that have functioned in Venezuela. Analyze the diagrams and think: what would you add to or subtract from that diagram if you wanted the company's profits to provide the most benefit to employees and Venezuelan society (social company) and not only to the company's owners? . . . All of you [students] will create collectively a diagram similar to the one below, but the diagram that you will create should show how a

company of social property can function, such as those that have been created today in Venezuela. Make any necessary adjustment to the diagram in accordance with the new Venezuelan reality of the twenty-first century).

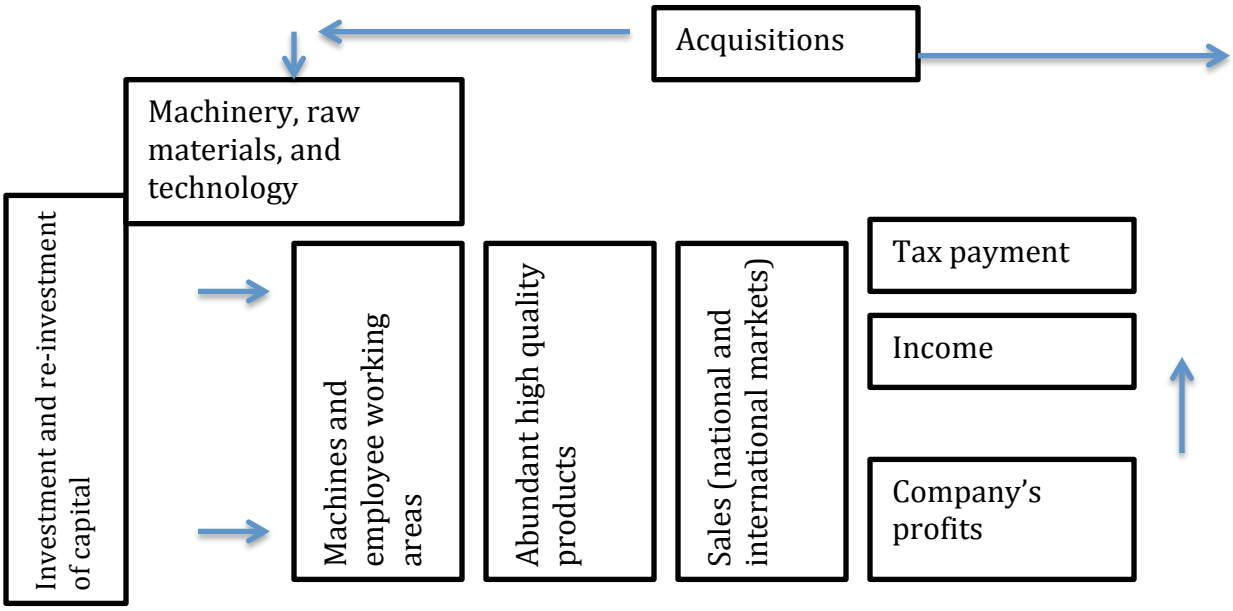

Figure 9 (Bracho & León, 2013, my translation, p. 41).

In an international context in which questioning capitalist globalization is "just like barking at the moon" (Vega Cantor, 2009), it is noteworthy that any educational system in the world dares to problematize private property and opens discussion as to the existence of other types of property, such as social property. It is also appealing that an official textbook leads students to think about alternative kinds of companies and not only capitalist ones. This effort seems fundamental given the crisis of civilization that capitalism has caused, such as the loss of productive land due to capitalist means of producing foods (Vega Cantor, 2009) and the dryness of the soil, among other issues.

These kinds of problems affect the peoples who live in the dependent periphery of capitalism at a higher rate, especially because those peoples are targets of the addiction to cheap labor (Sánchez, 2011).

For Aguirre (2014), the textbooks of *Colección Bicenteario* have the characteristic of disrupting the traditional lineal perspective on history and the ways in which social reality is taught, which is a problem for some teachers. One teacher explains that she tried to use those textbooks in her class, but she desisted due to the way in which they approach history and society. The teacher explains:

> *Tan pronto están hablando de la población indígena como de la afro descendiente, hay tanta mezcla de periodos históricos, van para atrás y para adelante con tanta frecuencia, que los alumnos terminan por no saber quiénes son en definitiva los originarios de nuestras tierras* (Aguirre, 2014, p. 76, my translation; The textbook starts talking about the Indigenous peoples and about the Afro-descendant population one after the other, the historical time periods are very mixed up, and the textbook goes forward and then backwards so much that the students end up not understanding who the native peoples of our land are).

As can been seen, this teacher complains about the way in which the *Colección Bicenteario* textbooks understand history and social sciences. Additionally, the above quote also reveals some of the teacher's conservative notions about how history should be taught (in a lineal and plain way) and also about conservative perspectives on the Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples of Venezuela.

If the colonization of Africa and America gave birth to capitalism today (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a, 2000b) and if Latin America is trapped in dependent capitalism, as this textbook suggests, it could be understood why Bolivarian education seeks to teach the concept of surplus value and other types of property. This education enables teachers to address not only capitalism as a general concept, but more specifically, the type of capitalism that Latin America suffers from and has to struggle against. This enables Bolivarian education to construct an alternative model of development for which a special kind of education is necessary. This textbook states: "The project of 'Endogenous development' and social property that Venezuela has led is a type of equitable and sustainable human development that offers the alternative of abandoning dependent capitalism and achieving economic independence" (Bracho & León, 2013, p. 46, my translation).

Conclusions

The analysis of Bolivarian curricular documents demonstrates that teaching and problematizing abstract concepts such as private property, economic dependency, and colonialism, among others, constitute a significant educative proposal not only in Latin America, but also in any country of the world. I cannot imagine there being an official national curriculum in France that teaches the connection between the economic dependency of Africa and the slavery and colonialism committed by Europe. However, if that were the case, it would be worth studying that curriculum, especially if the latter tries to base its proposal on African thinkers as philosophers.

In drawing from Simón Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez, the curricular documents in question attempt to break with the epistemological racism that has established Latin America as just a place from which to extract raw materials. Those raw materials could be anything from *café* to "interesting" ethnographies or stories from the colonized peoples.

Considering the Curricular Documents in Relation to Dussel

In the context of the *la pensée unique* (Ramonet, 1995), the Bolivarian curricular documents analyzed in this chapter address at least two challenges: an epistemological one and an ontological one in light of the philosophy of liberation (Dussel, 1978, 1985, 1990, 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 2007, 2009).

That is, those curricular documents represent a deconstruction of a discourse from the philosophical exteriority, that is, from the victims of modernity (Dussel, 2007). That epistemological struggle is key for the vanquished because it entails abandoning the fragmentation of the victims' account of capitalism's effects on the inhabitants of the periphery (Dussel, 2007). That epistemological struggle cannot be solved using the epistemological tools (categories, concepts) of the winners of that struggle because Western categories were not designed to see what the West has damaged. Western thought is the philosophical totality (Dussel, 1980/1985) that has dismissed the epistemological activity of the colonized. That certitude did not allow the colonized to speak from their categories. In this sense, the curricular documents studied in this chapter tackle that epistemological battle elaborating *from* other categories *from* the periphery's

thinkers, such as Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez. The National Bolivarian Curriculum states:

> *En relación con la ruptura con lo colonial, es preciso referir que a partir del legado de Rodríguez se inicia la búsqueda y la creación de paradigmas y enfoques del desarrollo propio, la invención de un vehículo para la verdadera libertad del pensamiento, cuyo producto sea una revolucionaria concepción de lo que debe ser el modelo educativo de las naciones americanas. El mismo Bolívar decía que su maestro enseñaba divirtiendo, con lo cual rompía con las rígidas costumbres educativas del colonialismo europeo; de allí que, en el siglo XXI, el SEB está concebido para romper las actuales estructuras del aprendizaje que persisten, en la fundamentación teórica de modelos exogenos* (2007, p. 40, my translation; In relation to the rupture with the colonial it is necessary to refer to Rodríguez's legacy as the starting point for the search for and the creation of development paradigms and lenses, as well as the invention of a vehicle for a true freedom of thought whose product is a revolutionary conception of how the educative model for the American nations has to be. Even Bolívar used to say that his mentor's emphasis was learning while having fun, with which he broke with the rigid customs of European colonialism. This is why, in the twenty-first century, the Bolivarian Educative System aims to break with the current learning structures that still are based on exogenous models).

As the study of the National Bolivarian Curriculum and the Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem's Curriculum has shown, the curriculum in Venezuela was

filled with imported positivist, behaviorist, cognitivist, developmentalist, and neoliberalist perspectives during the twentieth century (Ramírez, 2011; Mora-García, 2004, 2013). That totality of thought (Dussel, 1980/1985) covered the majority of the philosophical foundations of national curriculum in Latin America and in many other countries of the world. In this manner, that foundation as the colonizer's product did not see the philosophical exteriority (Dussel, 1980/1985), because Latin America existed only as an empirical Other to be looted. That exteriority of the totality as a system of thought has been considered as only a place of raw materials, whereas it has been a philosophical ethos where the suffering of the Other is the point of departure of the philosophy of liberation, as Dussel explains (1985/1980, 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 2007).

If we make use of the lense of decolonial education, we will see that such a historical epistemological process of capitalist education was not a simple intellectual effort for efficiency, but rather constituted an attempt to capture the curriculum (De Lissovoy, 2008).

Regarding the second challenge, an ontological one, it is revealing how the curricular documents in question make clear that Latin America and Venezuela have not changed their ontological character of being colonies. In this way, the studied documents have shown how Latin America has not broken its own exteriority (Dussel, 1980/1985) to realize itself, and that it is still considered an entity to be plundered. We cannot realize that without using the philosophy of liberation (Dussel, 1978, 1985/1980, 1990, 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 2007, 2009) and the coloniality of power (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a, 2000b) standpoints, because both frameworks identify

explicitly the way in which Latin America has not achieved modernity, since the latter needs a periphery *to be able to be* a modernity.

This fact has an ontological material dimension. The National Bolivarian Curriculum addresses the need for teaching that Latin America and Venezuela have to awaken from an ontological dream since Latin America has never been independent. In other words, Latin America has not changed its ontological character of being a colony.

The educative agenda is clear: it is necessary to tackle that situation of dependency. The document "The Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem" provides specific didactic strategies for fighting dependent capitalism in Venezuela, such as the Communitary Educational Comprehensive Projects (PEIC) and the Learning Projects (PA), which promote the connections among classrooms, communities, and local social problems. In this manner, those pedagogic types of projects break the totality of thought (Dussel, 1980/1985) that impedes teachers from connecting their work with communities.

Additionally, the textbook for sixth grade *Venezuela and Its People, Social Sciences for Sixth Grade* (Bracho & León de Hurtado, 2013) clearly tackles the historic-structural dependency in Latin America and Venezuela teaching not only capitalism, but also the key *social institutions* on which capitalism is founded, such as private property and the capitalist model of production. This idea is important for the field of education: it is necessary to not only problematize capitalism, but also to problematize those key social *institutions*. It is necessary to also *teach* other types of property and alternative models of production, such as the endogenous development that the curricular documents propose.

In doing this, the studied textbook is not only teaching capitalism as the totality (Dussel, 1980/1985) to be questioned, but also, the textbook's content is going further: it is even problematizing the foundational institutions of capitalism.

The studied curricular and didactic materials clearly address concepts related not only to capitalism in a general sense, but also to the specific point that there is no single type of capitalism for every area of the world.

Especially in the textbook for elementary education, it is noteworthy not only that the concept of private property is addressed, but even more so, that some other types of property (social property, for instance) are discussed and tied to other models of development (endogenous development). In this case, endogenous development as another model of production to be built is the exteriority (Dussel, 1980/ 1985) to which the colonized project themselves in educational terms. Since private property is the key institution from which capitalism is created, any kind of educational system that challenges that key institution is worthy of study. Using learning projects that connect local problems with the classroom and using textbooks to discuss how Latin America's poverty is tied to the wealth of the imperial nations are significant. This contrasts with the prevalence of the notion of educative competences in many Latin American countries (Andrade Cázares & Hernández Gallardom, 2010).

Some Problematic Points in the Bolivarian Curriculum Documents

Nevertheless, what is problematic is that all this curricular initiative to tackle colonialism and capitalism has been coopted by the Venezuelan state as the discourse that legitimates inequality among those who support the regime and those who do not. As

Kärkkäinen (2012) explains, it could be said that there are some national curriculums derived from the communities and there are others that come from the central administration. In this case, the Bolivarian curricular proposal is the type that comes from the central administration. In its early years, Bolivarian education was the kind of curricular project that opposed neoliberalism highly promoted by decentralized communities, while during its final years the centralization of that curricular project is clear.

This curricular effort has caused a huge discussion not only about the instrumental role of the national curriculum, but also about its philosophical character, which is positive in terms of what Brennan (2011) calls the need of theorizing views of curriculum. Yet it is important to mention that the Bolivarian curricular documents have not had the same effects in the schools due to a lack of resources and organization.

Nevertheless, Bolívar's concept of "Morality and Lights" as a deep and comprehensive way to understand education was not taken into account in all its philosophical dimensions in the studied curricular documents. As has been explained, Bolívar elaborated the category of "Morality and Lights" to express his own particular vision of the type of education needed to dismantle the colonial qualitative foundations of looting typical of the colonies. However, the National Bolivarian Curriculum (2007), the Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem's Curriculum (2007), the Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem (2012), and the textbook *Venezuela and Its People, Social Sciences for Sixth Grade* (2013) principally take up Bolívar's concept of "Morality and Lights" as a call to construct popular education leaving aside Bolívar's idea of

rebuilding the colonial subjectivity of social decomposition. For instance, the National Bolivarian Curriculum states:

> *En el Discurso de Angostura (1819) cuando Bolívar habla de Moral y Luces y la instrucción pública, está colocando importancia suprema en el impacto y los efectos transformadores de la educación popular. Esta posición le otorga una alta jerarquía a la educación de niños, niñas, jóvenes, indígenas, afrodescendientes, desposeídos y pobres, bajo la dirección y control directo del Gobierno, abriendo las puertas a las tesis del Estado Educador y de la educación como derecho social* (National Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007, pp. 10–11, my translation; In the Angostura Address (1819), when Bolívar talks about Morality and Lights and public instruction, he is emphasizing the huge importance of popular education. This fact gives great importance to the education of boys, girls, youths, Indigenous peoples, African-descended peoples, and other poor people, under direct management and control of the state in order to create an Educator State and the creation of education as social right).

As this national curriculum says, the idea of "Morality and Lights" is only re-signified in terms of addressing the need of creating popular education, but the studied curricular documents do not go deeper into the notion of "Morality and Lights" as a way to address the logic of looting that still exists in Venezuela as well as in the rest of Latin America. Understanding Bolívar's particular way of conceiving education would allow Bolivarian education to point out that corruption currently exists even in the educational system. For instance, on August 3, 2013, the Bolivarian government called a march

against corruption. One of the participants, an employee of the Ministry of Popular Power for Education of Venezuela (the department of education), said the following:

> *Estoy apoyando la lucha contra la corrupción porque no podemos continuar de esa forma. Decimos que queremos patria, pero muchas personas lo que hacen es vivir de lo que pueden agarrar del Gobierno y valerse de sus cargos públicos para hacerse millonarios* (Ministry of Popular Power for Education of Venezuela, 2013, para p, my translation; I am supporting the fight against corruption because we cannot continue in that direction. We are saying that we want to do something for the country, but what many people are doing is living off what they can get from the Government, making use of their positions in public office to become millionaires).

If the Bolivarian curricular proposal took into account Bolívar's notion of "Morality and Lights" in a more comprehensive manner, the former would point out how this particular notion can help to address the current social decomposition, which was a significant concern of Bolívar's thoughts on education.

On the other hand, the studied curricular documents address Rodríguez's urgency for constructing original thought and independence in Latin America, but they still need to connect Rodríguez's thought to the current social problems in Venezuela. For instance, the textbook *Venezuela and Its People, Social Sciences for Sixth Grade* (Bracho & León de Hurtado, 2013) brings up the problem of the corruption created by the decentralization of many of the state's functions and budgets, but the textbook does not connect that national problem with Rodríguez's legacy involving the need to address how

disorganized societies are not capable of being republics. That would imply discussing the way in which Venezuelan society is still disorganized in the context of the Bolivarian revolution. This didactic book could bring up how corruption does not allow Venezuela to base itself on a fair social system. However, some scholarship shows that at least the political nature of teaching has been addressed in the Bolivarian education (Sansevero de Suárez, Lúquez de Camacho, & Fernández de Celayarán Otilia, 2006; & Camacaro de Suárez, 2008).

In this manner, by making use of the coloniality of power perspective (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a, 2000b), the curricular documents restore Simón Rodríguez's idea that even though its formal status as a colony ended for Latin America, hierarchies still persist. In this way, the Bolivarian curricular proposal transgresses the philosophical totality (Dussel, 1985/1980, 2007) and offers a curriculum that clearly addresses the philosophical need to open the Latin American educational systems to their exteriority where the place of the victims of dominant orders are located (Dussel, 1985/1980) in terms of achieving an alternative philosophical presence (Xirau, 1993, 1997), but those documents address that in an interesting manner for Latin America as a whole, but not for the case of Venezuela in terms of its local problems. In other words, the Bolivarian curricular project is relevant, because it represents an educational model opposed to the neoliberal agenda in Latin America, but the former has been problematic in terms of addressing the internal and local contradictions of the Bolivarian revolution.

Chapter Six

Conclusions: Philosophy of Education for the Second and Definitive Independence of Latin America

The goal of this project was to determine the philosophical foundation of the Bolivarian education system, specifically in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Using a non-Western methodology to try to find a non-hegemonic philosophical basis, I applied the analectic method (Dussel, 1985/1980, 1990) as a way to construct an "*ana* (beyond) dominant" philosophy (Dussel, 1985/1980) for education. I integrated Xirau's use of images (Xirau, 1968a, 1968b, 1971, 1995) and the search for "the presence" (Xirau, 1993) in order to see how Dussel's philosophy of liberation (1978, 1985/1980, 1990, 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 2007, 2009) and the coloniality of power (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a, 2000b) can promote an understanding of the cultural, political, and epistemological orientation of Bolivarian education system.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings suggest that there is an historical path of a philosophy of education from the colonized world, in this case from Latin America, which does not take into account the Western dominant philosophy of education throughout history; that is, there is a Bolivarian philosophy of education rooted in Simón Bolívar, Simón Rodríguez (Bolívar's tutor and mentor), and contemporary Bolivarian education in the twenty-first century that has been silenced by the dominant Western philosophy of education. This Bolivarian philosophy of education is for the second and definitive independence of

colonized peoples. Many former colonies in the world have experienced their first independence (a political one),[50] hence "former," but Bolivarian education offers a philosophical project for those who want to achieve a separate and definitive independence.

The Theoretical Documents

Bolívar's educational ideas emphasized a specific type of subjectivity that colonization demands. When Bolívar began the fight for Latin American independence, the Spanish empire had established a 300-year-old tradition of looting and plunder. The ensuing flow of wealth from the colonies to Europe created a specific subjectivity of this pillage. For Bolívar, the subjective character of the colonial societies impeded their achieving independence in Latin America. For Bolívar, independence and virtue were two elements linked to the construction of a single Latin American homeland; as Porter says, for Bolívar "Only virtue is independent!" (Porter as cited in Salcedo-Bastardo, 1973, my translation, p. 550). Those two factors are connected for Bolívar because for him it was necessary to change the subjectivity created by pillage in the colonies through an educational model that replaces subjectivity with virtue. After all, the Spanish empire offered plentiful rewards for looters of any kind of natural resources, including human beings.

[50] The first independent colony in the American continent was Haiti, and it involved a successful fight for independence that was started in 1776 by its black inhabitants. Many countries achieved their first independence during the nineteenth century (countries in Latin America, for instance), while many others did so in the first half of the twentieth century, such as India and the majority of African nations, and others in the second half (some of the new ex-Soviet countries). Many others are still fighting for independence, e.g., the Basque province, Tibet, and Hong Kong, among others.

For Bolívar, the colonization of Latin American people constituted "tributary slums." To eradicate this scenario, he launched a project of independence, which included a radical philosophy of education. Bolívar made use of the image of *Moral y Luces* (Morality and Lights) to explain that educational foundations[51] are needed to achieve independence. He reasoned that the state and education should be fused; education is the province of the state. Bolívar had a Hellenistic perspective of the state; that is, he thought that the state was itself a pedagogic institution that should educate its people in formal and informal terms. Bolívar proposed the notion of the *Estado Docente* (Educator-State), suggesting that the state has to integrate all of its functions into an educative purpose to cultivate *Moral y Luces,* since there was the need to both undo the plundering of the colonies leading to their subjectivity, and create a new morality that would sustain independence for the new Latin American nations.

Simón Rodríguez, teacher and mentor of Simón Bolívar, created his model of education to oppose the colonialism that still prevailed even after the first independence from Spain. Immediately following the independence of Bolívar's Latin America, Rodríguez realized how the dismantling of the formal structures of European colonialism did not undo the symbolic aspects of that domination including repeated plundering and imposed subjectivity. In contemporary terms, Anibal Quijano (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a, 2000b) refers to this phenomenon as the coloniality of power.

[51] In this sense, Bolívar is talking about morality and lights with reference to the Latin word *mores*, which means "costumes," and *lights* as understanding or thinking; that is, Bolívar is talking about changing the colonial ways of life shaped by plundering.

Simón Rodríguez used aphorisms and poetic writing in order to create philosophical arguments to counter persistent colonialism. Rodríguez also used images as vehicles to construct knowledge (Xirau, 1968a, 1968b, 1971, 1995) to propose the kind of education that the colonized territories in Latin America needed in order to be independent republics, since the first fight for independence did not mean emancipation from the Spanish empire.

Rodríguez argued that the colonial character of the nascent capitalism in Europe established the Latin American colonies as territories to feed that capitalism. According to Rodríguez then, the *Sociedades Americanas* (American Societies) were "formed but not founded" (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, my translation, p. 6). Since he believed that Latin American peoples were not yet independent, he proposed originality as a philosophical need and popular education as a means of transforming the colonialism[52] and coloniality of the *Sociedades Americanas* (American Societies) into sovereign republics with *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* (Lights and Social Virtues).

For Rodríguez, Latin America was unnecessarily imitating European epistemologies and philosophies upon which to base educational projects. He believed that Indigenous and African peoples were actors who could have provided the knowledge needed to transform the colonies into new and transformed nations. For him, it was necessary to incorporate those groups of the population into the implementation of a popular education model. As Rodríguez says, "Napoleon wanted to rule over humanity;

[52] This is because the political independence in Latin America had already happened in 1811, by the time Rodríguez wrote his *Sociedades Americanas* and *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* from 1828 to 1842.

Bolívar wanted humanity to be able to rule itself/And I/Want humanity to learn to rule itself . . . /and among Napoleon and Bolívar I ask POOR STUDENTS TO COME TO ME" (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, p. 60, my translation, capitals in original). As was described in chapter four, incorporating these racialized groups meant that the wealthy population demanded a disregard of Simón Rodríguez's work to the extent that he was fired as an educator from many places in many Latin American countries. In view of contemporary thought about the coloniality of power perspective (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a, 2000b), it is clear that race was used to make European epistemologies and philosophies hegemonic and all non-white or European thought inferior, exotic, irrelevant, pagan, dangerous and unprogressive.

For Rodríguez a popular educational model founded in the originality of thought and the incorporation of exploited peoples would have led the new nations to a definitive independence. Education based on the colonizers' ways of knowing would only further exploit the Indigenous and enslaved people. The new national oligarchies did not agree with Rodríguez's idea of enrolling Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples into schools, and therefore his work was dismissed. That model of popular education would have dismantled the coloniality of power in the *Sociedades Americanas* (American Societies) in order to transform them into emancipated republics with *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* (Lights and Social Virtues). Obviously, that did not happen.

The Curricular Documents

The Bolivarian curricular proposal aims to expose the connection between colonialism and capitalism: "The challenge is to transform the capitalist scale of values into a different one focused on human beings; to transcend capitalist and Eurocentric colonialism" (National Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007, p. 18, my translation). In order to transcend capitalism and colonialism, Bolivarian education uses Bolívar's and Rodríguez's ideas about problematizing the social institution of private property and the current development-focused neoliberal model of production. As a result of this effort, the Bolivarian curricular project has launched the National Bolivarian Curriculum and Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem Curriculum as the official curricular policy to try to implement anti-capitalist and colonial education.

The common themes of the Bolivarian curricular project regard the need to introduce students to the problematization of private property and the current neoliberal model of production in order to construct an alternative one: endogenous development. To this end, the official national curriculum considers schools as axes of social and economic integration that function on behalf of the community. In this way, schools should be the settings in which cooperatives and other popular organizations could attempt to formulate an alternative kind of social property and therefore, endogenous development as a non-hegemonic model of development (Torres Perdomo, 2000; Chirinos Zárraga & Ortiz de Aponte, 2000; Fuenmayor de González & Doris Salas de Molina, 2008). Nevertheless, it is important to mention that the Bolivarian curricular agenda has mostly been part of the prescriptive central curriculum perspective

(Kärkkäinen, 2012), in which there is a central administration that launches official national curricula. While the connection between schools and communities is part of what the central administration aims to construct, the centralization and top-down nature of the effort may be a vestige of hegemonic perspectives, such as the hegemony of English (Shannon, 1995, 1999, 2008).

This curricular model is to problematize colonialism and the current capitalist model of production. For instance, the curricular documents provide content aimed at helping students to consider other non-colonial members and aspects of society, such as the Indigenous and Afro-descendant identity of Venezuela, a distinctive non-representative democracy, the existence of other types of property (as opposed to just private property), and therefore the possibility of having a different model of development (endogenous development).

The subject areas offered at elementary level in the area of Social Sciences, Citizenship and Identity address Indigenous resistance and the fight against African slavery as an official educational goal. Among the issues included in this subject area are *Afrovenezonalidad* (Afro-Venezuelan identity) (National Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007, p.75), as well as the creation of the *Día Nacional de los Pueblos y Comunidades Indígenas y Afrodescendientes* (National Day of Indigenous and Afro-Descendant Peoples and Communities) (National Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007, p. 37, my translation). The area of Language, Communication, and Culture intends to give students language instruction inspired by legendary ancestral visions that encompass the geo-historical consciousness of a multiethnic and multicultural Venezuela and Latin America (National

Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007). For example, Indigenous languages and Spanish are considered *idiomas maternos* (mother tongues) (National Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007, my translation, p. 20), and this subject uses the term *saberes* (ways of knowing) instead of only the concept of "knowledge" as a way of including Afro-descendant and Indigenous people's epistemologies.

The content offered by the Bolivarian curricular project is meant to be taught in conjunction with the following types of social learning projects: (1) *Proyectos Pedagógicos Integrales Comunitarios* (Comprehensive Community Education Projects) (PEIC) and (2) the *Proyecto de Aprendizaje* (Learning Project) (PA). While the former is meant to connect schools as institutions with the communities in which they exist, the latter attempts to promote endogenous development by addressing local problems and demonstrating alternative ways of forming property and social organization. Both projects address the goal of teaching students the need to overcome the current capitalist and colonial aspects of society.

The *Proyecto Educativo Integral Comunitario* (PEIC; Communitary Educational Comprehensive Project) and *Proyectos de Aprendizaje* (PA; Learning Projects) also serve to organize curricular content and teachers' work alongside the students' communities. In the PEIC, schools create a general assembly within the educational community to elaborate a community map of local social actors. Second, the assembly creates a "participatory comprehensive evaluation" (Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem, 2012, my translation, p. 7) assessing the ways in which the educational community (principal, teachers, parents, students, and other local social actors) can try to

tackle unresolved local needs. Finally, an "Action Plan" (Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem, 2012, my translation, p. 9) should be devised to determine the steps that should be taken in order to resolve the problem-posing situations. In the Learning Projects (PA) the teachers use the Comprehensive Community Education Projects (PEIC) as the educational basis with which to introduce students to other types of social property and the endogenous model of development.

Along with the aforementioned didactic projects, the Bolivarian curricular proposal has created didactic materials to be used in the classrooms. For instance, the elementary textbook *Venezuela y su gente, Ciencias Sociales para Sexto grado* (*Venezuela and Its People, Social Sciences for Sixth Grade*) (Bracho Arcilla & León de Hurtado, 2013) not only introduces students to the concept of private property and surplus value, but also introduces them to other types of property (social property, for instance) in order to teach the construction of other models of production, including endogenous development, which aims to dismantle the colonial dependency of Latin America on imperial globalization. This entails upholding endogenous development as a valid model of production instead of being marginalized or ignored in the periphery (Dussel, 1985/1980).

The studied curricular documents[53] represent a didactic guideline by which learning is not based on the individual standardization of competitiveness, but rather on

[53] The *Currículo Nacional Bolivariano* (National Bolivarian Curriculum, 2007), *Curriculum del Subsistema de Educación Primaria Bolivariana* (Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem Curriculum, 2007), *Planificación Educativa En El Subsistema De Educación Básica* (Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem, 2012), and the

its historic and sociocultural relevance. This didactical method allows teachers to do their work without their thinking within the framework of neoliberal standardizations, but rather they consider the immediate and local social relevance of their teaching. In this manner, these pedagogic educational projects break the tendency toward thinking of dominant totalities (Dussel, 1985/1980), which impedes teachers from connecting their work with the communities.

CONCLUSIONS

Bolivarian Education as Philosophy of Liberation

What this study tries to emphasize is that there are many historical paths in the philosophy of education from the colonized peoples and territories that have been silenced by the Western dominant canon. One of them is the Bolivarian model that has argued for the need for independence for Latin America as a whole from the time of Bolívar to the twenty-first century. The challenge is to consider the critical philosophy of education as a geo-historic construction in the context of permanent colonialism. In this way, Bolivarian education enables students to think about Latin America as an area that has been designed as the object of constant colonialism to feed modernity, within the current model of capitalist production, from the first invasion in the fifteenth century until now, as the coloniality of power framework indicates (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a, 2000b). It is not possible to propose an education that helps Latin America to dismantle that circle of recurrent colonialism without addressing the

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textbook *Venezuela y su Gente, Ciencias Sociales para Sexto Grado* (*Venezuela and Its People, Social Sciences for Sixth Grade*, Bracho Arcilla & León de Hurtado, 2013).

philosophical and historical legacy in that regard. This is why Simón Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez have been taken into account by the Bolivarian educational model in Venezuela in the twenty-first century.

Bolívar thought about Latin America as a whole not due to his individual preference but because he realized that after 300 years the peoples south of the Río Bravo shared concrete common conditions: colonial dependence, permanent genocide, slavery of Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, and the systemic plundering of their land and goods.

As a result of this, Bolívar launched his Jamaica Letter (1815) as a manifesto to consider the independence of Latin America as a whole and to create a huge, single homeland for the colonized peoples of the continent; he produced the Angostura Address (1819) to address education (Morality and Lights) as the basis of his political philosophy for the new independent Latin American republics. For Bolívar, education (Morality and Lights) is the foundation of his political philosophy of the state because for him it was necessary to dismantle the 300-year-long reproduction of the logic of looting that the European invasion imposed on its colonies. Without that new qualitative basis, the new nations would not be capable of emerging as republics. In this way, Bolívar's educational proposal is one that aims to transform tributary slums into independent republics; that is, it supports the use of education as a method of decolonization. The Bolivarian educational project upholds Bolívar's concept of "Morality and Lights" and the ideas of his Angostura Address in order to bridge the gap between education and social citizenship through popular education, emphasizing the need to understand education as a

social right in the context of the neoliberal commodification of education in Latin America.

Simón Rodríguez, Bolívar's teacher and mentor, developed this pedagogical project for Latin America in his intellectual work to say that the *American Societies* needed *Lights and Social Virtues* to be independent republics and not only societies, as the titles of his two more important works suggest. For Rodríguez, it is clear that Latin America did not achieve its independence from Europe in the nineteenth century. For him, the real independence is still to come. In this sense, Rodríguez made use of what Xirau calls an image (1968a, 1968b, 1971, 1995) to describe how Latin America was living in an armistice or a cease-fire that would determine the course of its independence. The legacy of Simón Rodríguez is key for the current philosophy of education: the peoples south of the Río Bravo need a philosophy of education that helps them to achieve definitive emancipation from the philosophical totality of the empires (Dussel, 1985). The condition of not being a colony anymore is the philosophical presence (Xirau, 1993, 1997) that Bolivarian education tries to rescue from Rodríguez's work.

Rodríguez was already aware, even before the coloniality of power framework (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a, 2000b), of the fact that what Europeans took from their colonies was out of proportion to what the colonies received from the European empires. That fact made him think that real independence had not occurred.

Bolivarian education tries to uphold Rodríguez's idea of the originality of thought as a basic premise in order to construct an independent Latin America in the twenty-first

century. Simón Rodríguez knew that if Latin Americans insisted on copying European thinking, the colonial-capitalist relationship between Europe and Latin America would keep Latin American peoples as colonial societies. In his project, popular education meant creating schools—not orphanages—for Indigenous people, Africans, and other *casta* members to teach them how to produce local products and participate in local trade. Bolivarian education aims to implement Simón Rodríguez's notion of "*o inventamos o erramos*" (we must either invent or err) (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, p. 88) to emphasize the notion that Latin Americans should have their own educational models created by their own intellectuals if their nations want to achieve definitive independence.

That goal is reflected in the national curriculums that aim to guide the educational system in Venezuela. As has been shown in chapter five, the national Bolivarian curricular documents represent a significant proposal in the context of the commodification of education in the last forty years of refashioned colonialism—neoliberalism—in Latin America. In this sense, Bolivarian education is part of a large project of showing the underside of modernity (Dussel, 1996), as it addresses the notion that the current state of development could not exist without the underdevelopment of Latin America, Africa, Middle East, and Asia, which is key for Bolivarian education.

It is significant how the Bolivarian curricular documents address the need to introduce students to the problematization of the social institutions of capitalism, such as private property and the current model of production. Bolívar and Rodríguez's ideas are re-signified to encourage students to think of alternative types of property and social models of production, such as endogenous development and non-capitalist ways to

construct commerce. This educative attempt at least tries to call into question the connections among politics, economics, and philosophy as a complex totality (Dussel, 1985/1980, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c) that only views Latin American individuals as a resource to exploit.

Despite its many limitations, the foundations of the Bolivarian curricular proposal problematize the dominant ethnocentrism that exists under the pretense of universality in education. Considering that the importation of foreign traditions of thought has occurred frequently in the continent, the coloniality of power perspective (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a, 2000b) along with the philosophy of liberation (Dussel, 1978, 1985, 1990, 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, etc.) is key to demonstrate that Bolivarian education implements Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez's philosophical proposal to demonstrate the fact that although the formal colonial status has ended for Latin American countries, dependent capitalism still creates a colonial condition for them. This intellectual effort is important to the extent to which it constitutes a process of "decolonizing the imagination" (Sandoval, 2000), since the colonized territories are not thought of as places where "serious" knowledge can come from.

The coloniality of power as well as the philosophy of liberation shows that when Latin American individuals including Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples are incorporated as active epistemological actors into the discussion, the foundation of education brings attention to those who have been neglected by the philosophical totality (Dussel, 1985/1980, 1996). In this way, the voices of Latin American individuals are taken into account as a theoretical basis for incorporating the neglected Others from the

colonized territories of the continent into the discussion. As this work shows, that can happen if an *ana* (beyond) method of thought is used. This analytical strategy (Dussel, 1990) suggests that if non-dominant theoretical lenses are used, individuals from the "Third World" can demonstrate the ways in which colonized peoples, who are affected by the international division of colonies and the labor force, acquire philosophies of liberation (Dussel, 1978, 1985, 1990, etc.). Whereas Grosfoguel (2008) has addressed the need to understand the colonialty of power in its patriarchal and modernist obsession for progress, it is important to mention that Bolivarian education does not elaborate fully on the ways in which gender can be part of the construction of colonial spaces in education. Mignolo and Tlostanova (2008) discuss the complex colonial matrix of factors between co-optation and subjectivity, and how authority is understood as well as how gender plays a key role in the creation of colonial societies. Nevertheless, Bolivarian education mostly emphasizes the colonial dependence of Latin America in terms of imperial invasions and dominations. In another aspect, Catherine Walsh (2009) has helped to discuss the ways in which multiculturalism is another discourse used to co-opt the decolonization struggles in Latin America.

Some Problems and Limitations of the Bolivarian Educational Project

Just as the Bolivarian revolution has not been free of contradictions, Bolivarian education's effects on schools have not been either.

While Bolivarian education, through its curricular project, takes up Bolívar´s concern to undo the logic of plundering the colonies, it does not address that this logic still exists in Venezuela. Students are not led to problematize the fact that there may be

groups of people within Venezuela that still work within the logic of pillaging. For instance, the struggle of hoarding products in the family shopping basket could be addressed by Bolivarian education as part of the current logic of pillaging that Bolívar tried to undo through "Morality and Lights."[54] In this way, the connection between Bolívar's philosophical legacy and the current educational model is visible in terms of its relation to Venezuela as a colony, but it is blurry in terms of the fact that subjective symbolic structures continue to persist despite the fact that Venezuela does not have the formal status of a colony, as is explained by the coloniality of power (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a, 2000b).

If Bolivarian education draws from Bolívar's notion of the state as a pedagogic structure, this should bring forth a new understanding of education as "Morality and Lights;" nonetheless, the philosophical foundation of the curricular proposal does not consider teaching the way in which the state can be co-opted by those who only want to take advantage of the situation, or "capitalize" on it. That is, Bolivarian education should perhaps consider revisiting Bolívar's ideas in terms of teaching the students how conservative and progressive groups can work together at the same time within the structure of the state. For instance, many people within the state bureaucracy, as well as opponents to the Venezuelan government, have taken advantage of what Golinger (2006;

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[54] Venezuelan people do know that the state does not produce the food for the population, as private producers and companies produce it. As a consequence of the national struggle between the supporters and detractors of the Bolivarian revolution, some private food producers have impeded the sale of staple foods, but other individuals have taken advantage of this to resell those products at higher prices. See *Claves: ¿Quiénes están detrás del acaparamiento en Venezuela?* (TeleSur, 2015).

Golinger & Migus, 2009) has shown to be a foreign millionaire intrusion against the Bolivarian Revolution.

This contradiction shows how local, national, and international social groups are interconnected in such a way that reproduces the flows of power and capital needed to maintain the hegemonic version of capitalism. If modernity and colonialism are two sides of the same coin, as the coloniality of power addresses (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a, 2000b), the current way in which local and international stakeholders—whether from the right or the left—are linked provides certain evidence that Venezuela and Latin America are still tied to those international patterns of power. This scenario has not been made visible due to the fact that Latin American philosophers have not been able to construct these categories to see how they look from within the colonies. If Bolivarian education has advanced in this regard by incorporating Latin American authors who have broken away from philosophical totality (Dussel, 1985/1980), Bolivarian education has failed to encourage Venezuelan students to consider the extent to which the international right, the Venezuelan state, and local de facto powers operate without considering their loyalty to the Bolivarian revolution nor to the conservative project. Bolivarian education should perhaps adopt Bolívar's philosophical thoughts on those matters to illuminate in philosophical terms what De Lissovoy calls violation (2012a, 2012b) as the specific logic underlying capitalism. Bolivarian education has drawn from Marxism to emphasize the need to problematize the current stage of capitalism. One of the problems is that Marx poses the moment of domination upon surplus value; however, as De Lissovoy explains, (2012b), the surplus

value is a violation, that is, the injury itself, that founds its existence in the same moment in which it rejects and co-opts the oppressed (2012a, 2012b). If Bolivarian education exposes that moment of violation, the educational project could address the way in which oppression and emancipation can exist in the blurry difference between supporters and detractors of the Bolivarian revolution.

Simón Rodríguez's philosophical legacy has also been incorporated into the Bolivarian curricular scheme. However, this also poses some problems. Bolivarian education rescues Rodríguez's notion that Latin Americans, who had long endured racial and epistemological struggles to be able to think for themselves, found a worthy representative of independent thought in Simón Rodríguez. Since 1828, Rodríguez had pointed out the colonial character of nascent capitalism in Europe, which led him to proclaim that the *Sociedades Americanas* (American Societies) were "formed but not founded" (Rodríguez, 1990b/1842, my translation, p. 6). This implied that Latin American peoples were not yet independent; so he proposed both originality as a philosophical need and popular education as a means to transform their disorganized societies into sovereign republics through *Luces y Virtudes Sociales* (Lights and Social Virtues), as described earlier. Nevertheless, although the National Bolivarian Curriculum (2007) and the Bolivarian Elementary School Subsystem Curriculum (2007) do talk about Rodríguez's idea of the existence of unequal commercial exchange between wealthy and poor nations, the national curricula do not expand Rodríguez's notion to explain to the students the way in which national opponents, as well as supporters of the Bolivarian revolution, participate in the unequal economy that is capitalism.

For instance, the curricular guide "Education Planning in the Basic Education Subsystem" (2012) explains how the (1) *Proyectos Pedagógicos Integrales Comunitarios* (Comprehensive Communitary Education Projects) (PEIC) and (2) the *Proyecto de Aprendizaje* (Learning Project) (PA) are didactic tools that frame learning in terms of the sociocultural relevance of what is being taught. Nevertheless, the PEIC and PA should perhaps address the idea that the definitive independence that Rodríguez talked about depends too much on understanding that those who have de facto power over poor Latin Americans share overt interests. These didactic projects should perhaps take into account the fact that there are not only spaces of oppression within the students' communities, but also spaces of integrity, since the moment of domination is one that Marx did not anticipate: the space of violation (De Lissovoy, 2012a, 2012b). This concept understands power in terms of accumulation of privilege, but addresses how integrity can be created in spaces in which human beings encounter each other. The Bolivarian curricular proposal should perhaps adopt this concept in order to introduce students to ideas not anticipated by Marx.

On the other hand, the sixth grade textbook *Venezuela y su gente, Ciencias Sociales para Sexto grado* (Venezuela and Its People, Social Sciences for Sixth grade) (Bracho Arcilla & León de Hurtado, 2013) clearly addresses the following points made by Simón Rodríguez: (1) what Europeans take from their colonies in Latin America is disproportionate to what the colonies receive from Europe; (2) an unequal kind of capitalism benefits Europe but works against the Latin American colonies; and (3) race plays a key role in the international flow of capital. In this way, this text is key for

teaching students about the role of private property and surplus value in this international process, but what the textbook could point out is the extent to which Rodríguez's concept of definitive independence in Latin America has also to do with addressing internal contradictions. This independence has not been achieved due to the fact that there are national and local de facto powers that benefit from capitalism linked historically with colonialism and currently with the coloniality of power.

Also problematic is that in some regions, the objective of having schools work closely with their local communities has not been achieved. Some of the critiques state that teachers cannot work with their students and communities due to the amount of work involved. The complaints continue that teachers should focus instead on their work within the classroom, because that is the pedagogic goal and role that they should play in education (Ramos, 2006; Carvajal, 2011). In addition to this, not all the teachers have received an increase in their wages, and many of them need proper preparation in order to understand the challenges that the Bolivarian elementary schools entail, which have caused a lot of disorganization within schools.

Although Bolivarian education represents the philosophical rescue of a silenced philosophy of education that could be derived from colonized peoples, the contradictions of the Bolivarian revolution have dampened its potential. Whereas the significance of the Bolivarian revolution has been great in terms of the search for a contra-hegemonic project for Latin America (Lander, 2004), the former has been problematic for the people in Venezuela who have dealt with internal confrontations in addition to what Golinger

(2006) and Golinger and Migus (2009) describe as the meddling of foreign millionaires, which continues the pillaging and exploitation.

Critical Pedagogy and Bolivarian Education

Bolivarian education tries to address in curricular and didactic terms that capitalism is not the same economic and social structure in every instance where it operates in the world. This educational model shows how Latin America suffers from a type of colonial and dependent capitalism in which the capitalism from the center is supplied from the periphery. As a part of this, other countries and international financial organisms condition the economies of Latin American nations. This causes Latin America to have weak institutions and undeveloped economies. As the coloniality of power perspective has shown (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992a, 1992b; Quijano, 2000a, 2000b), it is not possible to understand developed capitalism without understanding permanent colonialism.

In this sense, critical pedagogy can insist that the national curricula address this form of capitalism and how it enriches the center and impoverishes the periphery. For instance, some critical pedagogy curricula can be developed showing that the majority of Latin American nations have implemented the free market economical measures suggested by developed economies from 1973 to today. But some countries have tried to take other economical paths since those economic initiatives involving industrialization and foreign investment actually increased the poverty of their population. For instance, critical pedagogy can develop curriculum to show how even in a best-case scenario in Mexico, the levels of poverty have remained the same as they were in 1968; that is, fifty

years were lost in the fight against poverty.[55] What is key is that México and Colombia adopted free trade agreements during the same period of time. These free trade agreements benefit the developed countries and continue to plunder Latin America. Another serious fallout of this situation is that both countries, México and Colombia, are now are known to be among the most violent nations in Latin America. In this scenario, critical pedagogy may challenge through its curricula the assumption that development is the solution for the oppressed nations of Latin America. Actually, what is key is teaching that industrialization and development only benefit the center and never the periphery.

During recent decades common sense has been that economic development was achieved by means of industrialization, since wealthy countries with capitalist economies achieved such development in that way. However, within a critical pedagogy perspective, it is important to address that such a notion of development is built on the fact that there is another version—the other side of the coin—of that process of development, which has been free market reforms that have refashioned the way to impose colonialism in Latin America.

Although the majority of Western countries are members of the international funding agencies, they are ruled by the G7 along with the biggest corporations of the world. Those international financial organisms force undeveloped nations to implement structural adjustment plans, which in Latin America has meant the privatization of basic social services such as health, education, housing, and even water, which were supplied by the state before neoliberalism was implemented in the area (Guillén, 2007; Preciado

[55] What it is interesting is that Aracely Damian (2004) came to this conclusion even using different methodologies to measure poverty.

Coronado & Florido Alejo, 2013; Preciado Coronado & Uc, 2012; Fregoso Bailón, 2010, 2011). For instance, there were intense, massive protests in Bolivia in 2000 due to the attempt to privatize water supplies (Kruse, 2005). In this case, free market reforms of the macroeconomy were forced to take place in Bolivia, which allowed international corporations to create a huge business out of water with the cooperation of local oligarchies that might even be a part of these corporations. The Bolivian people—primarily Indigenous people—started, through that fight for their water, a philosophical path that today has translated into the need to defend Latin American peoples from the idea of progress; that is, the geographical location of suffering (Bolivia) is also the philosophical point of departure (Dussel, 1985/1980, 1998, 2007). The construction of these categories is about not only to address, but also to defend the colonized peoples from more colonialism.

Education for Endogenous Development

With liberation through education, schools must serve as the pivotal axis around which other local organizations address their social problems. As I have described, Bolivarian education tries to situate schools as settings of local engagement. This implies having a different accountability of education goals and projects, and that is problematic for the corporations and international funding agencies, which ask for individualized rather than community accountability in return for the million dollar loans that Latin Americans "need" in order to survive. Although those efforts have not been implemented with success in all schools in Venezuela, Bolivarian education has tried to understand schools as political and economical hubs of community organization in order for

education for liberation to be realized. For critical educators that means that changing the role of schools will also change what is understood as knowledge itself. If any official curriculum attempts to create schools as settings of local organization for the resolution of local problems, that will transform knowledge into a process for credentialing students in the understanding of the ways in which local reality is viewed during its transformation. That will also imply having a distinctive accountability and a way of measuring knowledge, in which the social relevance of what students learn is the key.

As this work has shown, Bolivarian education tries to address these kinds of experiences in philosophical terms, which critical pedagogy can use to show the need to teach that the solution for Latin American peoples is not development, but rather, liberation from that development. Because it is not their development; it is the development of wealthy capitalist powers.

In this regard, the notion of endogenous development upheld by Bolivarian education is key so that critical pedagogy can emphasize the need not only to critique capitalism, but also to teach other models of production, and therefore, of development. For instance, as in my earlier analysis, the Bolivarian curricular project's textbook *Venezuela and Its People, Social Sciences for Sixth Grade* (Bracho Arcilla & León de Hurtado, 2013) discusses the necessity for Venezuela to "*sembrar el petróleo*" ("plant the seeds of oil"), meaning that Latin American nations should use their raw materials to promote local and national production of goods and industry, that is, to strengthen the internal market. In this manner, critical pedagogy can incorporate the idea of endogenous development in opposition to the "common sense" concept that the only way to create

development is through the model of foreign investment and indiscriminate free market access. For instance, critical educators can teach that in 2005 Ecuador spent 40% of its public budget to pay foreign debt, but once Rafael Correa took over the presidency, he said that Ecuador would stop paying that debt in order to use part of that money to develop the internal market. As in the case of Portugal, Greece, and Spain, Ecuador was told that such a decision would cause hunger and the breakup of the country, but that did not happen. Instead, Ecuador's poverty level fell by nine percentage points, from 37.8% to 28.6% in 2015, and the country has gained freedom to make choices about its domestic market (Jativa, 2012). By doing this, Ecuador is challenging not only the concrete idea that there is life beyond the idea of progress in the international free market, but also the context in which that idea lives, which is a more complicated notion to address. That is, by incorporating Latin American individuals and peoples as interlocutors, critical pedagogy can introduce the idea to education of how important it is to problematize lived experience and actual problems. In this understanding, Bolivarian education and its emphasis on teaching endogenous development as another model of development beyond what exists now are helping students to disrupt the philosophical totality (Dussel, 1985/1980, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 2007) that emerges as the philosophical scenario from which students struggle to escape.

As I have mentioned, Bolivarian education has many problematic issues. One of the most important ones is its need to address in its official curriculum the fact that domination is also about the way in which power does not recognize any type of revolution among supporters of detractors. In the Bolivarian curricular material it should

be emphasized that revolution is necessary and good for all when its aims are equity and social justice. The contradictions of the Bolivarian revolution have shown how the injury itself in a society is the moment in which anybody can be assaulted or can construct spaces of emancipation. The instant that reproduces itself is the moment of violation (De Lissovoy, 2012a, 2012b) that critical curriculum can address as a way to teach their students that oppression and revolution are always nearby.

Education for Epistemological Independence

Critical educators should be able to consider the ways in which Latin America can shed light on their philosophical foundations. For instance, as the Bolivarian curricular project has shown, when colonized territories revitalize their own intellectuals, it is possible to find historical philosophical paths that have been isolated by canonical thinking. The idea of material and epistemological independence is important in Bolivarian education, because this notion leads students to consider constructing the second and definitive independence of Latin America. Critical educators can consider the fact that many other nations of the world are also waiting for their definitive independence from empires, and an alternative philosophical presence (Xirau, 1993, 1997). I am inspired by the thought that if Freire were alive today, I am certain that he would have gone in this direction: working for the definitive liberation of Latin America. Even in his latest works Freire was following the discussion on postmodernist approaches to education (1993a, 1993b, 1993c) and neoliberalism (1996), among other projects.

For example, in *Pedagogía en Proceso: Cartas a Guinea Bissau* (Pedagogy In Process: The Letters to Guinea Bissau) (2011/ 1977), Freire describes how the first

President of Cape Verde, Aristides Maria Pereira, who ruled from 1975 to 1991, talked about the need to decolonize the mind, or what Amílcar Cabral called the "reafricanization of mentalities" in Guinea Bissau (Freire, 2011/1977, p. 24). In this sense, even though Bolivarian education is not perfect, it helps educators and students in their process of the "Latinoamericanization" of their mentalities. That is part of the challenge of dismantling the philosophical totality (Dussel, 1985/1980). Gaining epistemological independence and educating to promote endogenous development in opposition to dependence on foreign economies are two parts of a process that at least try to problematize the certitudes with which people live, impacting most directly the notions of truth that have formed people's identities. The "reafricanization of mentalities" in that African country after the official Portuguese colonization also meant the demobilization of the certitudes to which its citizens were subjected in order to maintain that colonial order, just as the "Latinamericanization of mentalities" would help stop the symbolic systems of production linked with the implicit massive belief that free trade treaties are necessary.

As I have described, by rescuing Bolívar and Simón Rodríguez as core philosophical foundations, Bolivarian education addresses how critical educators can enrich their perspectives by incorporating Latin American individuals not as experiences but as epistemological social actors, who in their fight for liberation create other philosophies. When the wealthy sectors of the population of México were celebrating what Orgambides (1992) described as México entering the first world thanks to the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the soaring stock

market, the Zapatista Army for National Liberation (EZLN) rose on January 1, 1994, the same day that NAFTA entered into effect; that is, the Indigenous peoples of Chiapas let the wealthiest Mexicans know that there was a historical, silent but latent reality of colonialism that neither modernity nor capitalism were able to erase. The Zapatistas have made use of many images to describe their philosophy; one of them says, "*para que nos vieran, nos tapamos el rostro*" (we covered our faces so that they could see us) (EZLN, 1995). In this regard, there are many Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and mestizo peoples that have, along with the Bolivarian proposal, Other ways of knowing. As has been described in the methodology of this work, the use of images as philosophical arguments (Xirau, 1993, 1997) constitute one way of stopping the imperialism of the modernist logo-centric way of constructing and validating knowledge. In this work I have described the ways in which some images positioned Bolívar and Rodríguez not as cases to be talked about, but as philosophical individuals with whom it is possible to sit at the table to discuss how to construct Other notions through the perspectives of colonized peoples. Many Indigenous, Afro-descendant, mestizo, and other peoples have a multitude of images with which to enrich the discussion on the foundations of education. In this sense, poetry as a vehicle of another philosophical presence (Xirau, 1993, 1997) can enrich critical pedagogy beyond being seen as an afterthought or folklore.

That process implies the disruption of the episteme through ethics (Dussel, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c) because that means situating the locus of enunciation of the philosophical foundations of critical perspectives on education for and from the individuals and peoples who have survived colonialism and the coloniality of power. The exteriority (Dussel,

1985/1980, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c) from which those peoples emerged resembles the visibility of a neglected shipwreck—a shipwreck caused and organized as a large process of colonialism. After that negation is broken down, the place where the victims have been throughout history emerges as the exteriority that did not exist, since the horizon as a coherent entity does not accept other horizons (Dussel, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c). Although the re-signification of Bolívar and Rodríguez is not entirely complete and the curricular proposal still lacks many developments, Bolivarian education as it has been described is significant because it is making visible a historical path among the many others that have been silenced but that are latent and waiting to be seen and incorporated into the lives of colonized peoples. In this case, Bolivarian education addresses the need to awaken from an ontological dream since Latin America has never been independent. That philosophical turn enables Latin America to change its ontological identity as a colony; and that contribution is key, because this educational project might lead to the second and definitive independence of Latin America.

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